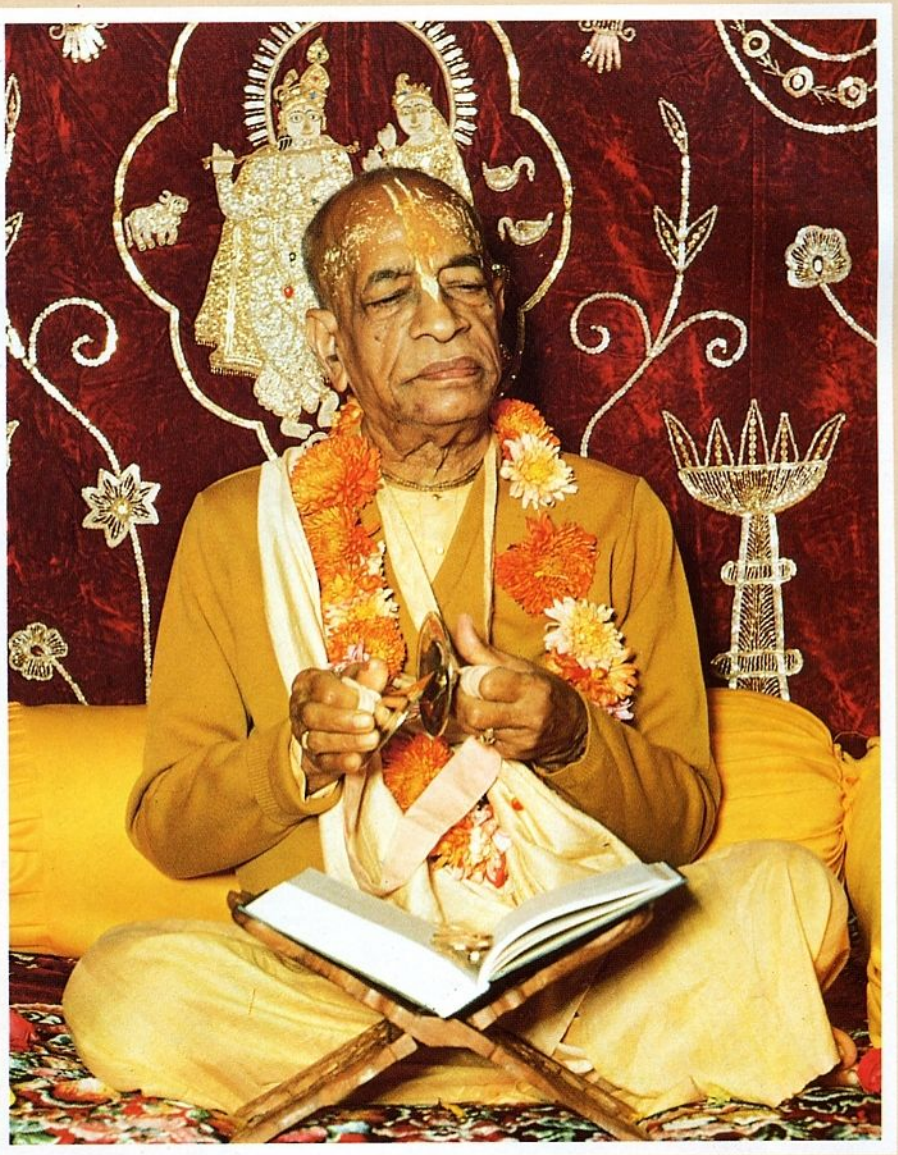
Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

Vol.24 No.7 THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age sixty-nine, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India's Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, traveling almost nonstop, Śrīla Prabhupāda molded his international society into a worldwide confederation of *āśramas,* schools, temples, and farm communities. He passed away in 1977 in Vṛndāvana, India, the place most sacred to Lord Kṛṣṇa. His disciples are carrying forward the movement he started.



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BACK TO GODHEAD is the monthly journal of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When Śrīla Prabhupāda began the Society (in New York City, in 1966), he put into writing the purposes he wanted it to achieve. They are as follows:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, as it is revealed in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*
3. To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).
4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Kṛṣṇa.
6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life.
7. With a view toward achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, books, and other writings.

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

BACK TO GODHEAD

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His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda)
**His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

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PRONUNCIATION. We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and hold it twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce the aspirated consonants (**ch, jh, dh,** etc.) as in staun**ch**-**h**eart, hedge-hog, and red-hot. Pronounce the sibilants **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, and for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

SPIRITUAL NAMES. Members of the International Society for Krishna Conciousness receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with dāsa (dāsī for women), meaning "servant." For instance, the name *Kṛṣṇa dāsa* means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

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COVER: The Vedic literature describes that the post of Brahmā, the first created living being and the engineer of the universal creation, is the highest responsible post in the universe. In the material world, Brahmā represents the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is therefore invested with multifarious energies by which he generates from his mind and body the demigods, the qualities of nescience, the great sages, sacrificial paraphernalia, social duties, the Vedic hymns, the arts and sciences, the letters of the alphabet, and many other aspects of the cosmic manifestation. (Painting by Yadurāṇī-devī dāsī.)

SACRIFICE N

"Everyone must perform sacrifice," Lord Kṛṣṇa says. And He

A lecture in London on September 5, 1973
by HIS DIVINE GRACE
A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA
Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma
na tyājyaṁ kāryam eva tat
yajño dānaṁ tapaś caiva
pāvanāni manīṣiṇām

"Acts of sacrifice, charity, and penance are not to be given up; they must be performed. Indeed, sacrifice, charity, and penance purify even the great souls."
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.5)

There are four stages of spiritual life: *brahmacarya* [celibate student life], *gṛhastha* [householder life], *vānaprastha* [retired life], and *sannyāsa* [renounced life]. From the beginning of student life, *brahmacarya,* one must be trained how to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *brahmacārī* is trained to rise early in the morning, offer fire sacrifice, study the *Vedas,* and then perform *saṅkīrtana,* preaching the glories of the Lord. There are so many routine duties for *brahmacārīs,* and these must be executed.

For *gṛhasthas* [householders], the first duty is to give charity. And who will accept this charity? The *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* [renunciants]. The *brahmacārī* may accept charity on behalf of the spiritual master, and the *sannyāsī* may accept just enough charity for his maintenance, but no more.

A householder cannot accept charity, unless he is a *brāhmaṇa.* Then he may accept charity, but he cannot accumulate money. Whatever he gets, he must use as much as he needs for his maintenance and then give any extra money in charity. There is a Bengali proverb that says, "Even if a *brāhmaṇa* gets 100,000 rupees, he remains a beggar." Why? Because he immediately distributes it all in charity.

And for the *sannyāsīs* and *vānaprasthas* [retirees], *tapasya* is most important. *Tapasya* means voluntarily accepting all kinds of inconveniences. In material life one tries to avoid all inconveniences, but spiritual life means to accept many different kinds of austerities for the sake of Kṛṣṇa, even at the risk of all inconvenience.

So, here Lord Kṛṣṇa says, *yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyam:* "One should never give up sacrifice, charity, and austerity." These things must be continued under all circumstances.

Now, the impersonalistic, Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* strictly follow the principles of austerity—at least those who are genuine, not false. Three times a day they take a bath, even in the severest cold; they lie down on the floor to sleep; and they always study Vedānta and Sāṅkhya philosophy. But in spite of all these austerities, they do not approve of the worship of the Deity, the transcendental form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because they are impersonalists, they do not worship the form of God. So the *śāstra* [scripture] says, *ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ:* "Although the Māyāvādīs think themselves liberated, they are averse to worshiping the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and so their consciousness is impure."

The Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* address one another, "*Namo-nārāyaṇāya* [Obeisances to Nārāyaṇa]." This means that they think every one of them has become Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord. This is their philosophy. And from this *namo-nārāyaṇāya* principle, Vivekananda Swami manufactured the word *daridra-nārāyaṇa,* "poor Nārāyaṇa."

The joy of *yajña,* or sacrifice for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, is demonstrated by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates. Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and He appeared five hundred years ago to introduce the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*—the congregational chanting of the holy names of God—as the authorized religious process for this age.

MADE EASY

comes as Caitanya Mahāprabhu to show us how easy it can be.

Painting by Pandu dasa

So, for the Māyāvādīs Nārāyaṇa has become a very cheap thing: "Everyone has become Nārāyaṇa; everyone has become God." And then the rascal God goes to the hospital and has an operation. They have no shame. They never think, "If I am God, why can't I cure my bodily pains? What kind of God am I?" No, this thought never occurs to them. Rather, these rascals proclaim that they are God, and there is another set of rascals who accept them as God. Vivekananda said, "Why are you searching for God? Don't you see so many Gods loitering in the street?"

No. We do not accept such a God. Our God is different. Our Nārāyaṇa is the real Nārāyaṇa—the exalted Supreme Personality of Godhead. He cannot be compared even with such demigods as Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, what to speak of these rascal Māyāvādīs. As it is said,

yas tu nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ
brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vīkṣeta
sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam

"Any person who thinks that Lord Brahmā or Lord Śiva is equal to Lord Nārāyaṇa is a rascal." So the Māyāvādīs are rascals. They say, "Any demigod is as good as Viṣṇu. You can worship any god and get the same result; it doesn't matter." They believe that ultimately the Absolute Truth is impersonal. And so you can imagine any form and meditate on that, and ultimately you will merge into that impersonal Brahman. This is their philosophy, but this is not the fact.

In the ultimate issue, the Absolute Truth is Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate:* The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases—the impersonal Brahman; the localized Paramātmā [Supersoul]; and Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*). Ultimately the Absolute Truth is Bhagavān, and there are many expansions of Bhagavān (*advaitam acyutam anādim anantarūpam*). Kṛṣṇa has millions and trillions of expansions. One of them is the Paramātmā, the Supersoul in everyone's heart (*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*). And the Paramātmā also resides in every atom: *aṇḍāntara-stha-paramāṇucayāntara-stham.*

So, Lord Kṛṣṇa has many expansions, but they are all one, *advaitam.* For example, if you place millions of pots of water in the sunshine, you will find millions of suns reflected in the water. But although we see that millions of suns are reflected in the millions of pots, we know that the sun is one. Similarly, God is one, but He can expand Himself into millions and trillions of forms. There is no question of counting them.

The Māyāvādī philosophy is that because God has expanded Himself into so many forms and is thus all-pervading, He is finished. This is a materialistic conception. Suppose you take a big piece of paper, tear it into small pieces, and then throw the pieces away. Then the original paper is lost; it no longer exists. That is the Māyāvādī philosophy: Because God is all-pervading, He has no form.

But this is not the spiritual conception. The spiritual conception is *pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate:* Lord Kṛṣṇa is the complete, supreme whole, and even though He expands Himself into millions and trillions of complete forms, He still remains complete. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is described as *avyaya,* which means He is never diminished in any way. Suppose I have one hundred pounds in my bank balance. If I take one, two, three, four, five—in this way, my bank balance will be finished. But Kṛṣṇa is not like that. He is so complete that although unlimited complete forms expand from Him, He still remains the complete whole. This is the statement of the *Īśopaniṣad,* and this is the real conception of God.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the complete, supreme whole, and even though He expands Himself into millions and trillions of complete forms, He remains complete. Therefore He is described as avyaya, which means He is never diminished in any way.

So, unless you practice *yajña* [sacrifice], how will you understand this philosophy? It is not possible. In the present age, however, the ritualistic sacrifices recommended in the *Vedas* are not possible to execute. They are very expensive. You have to acquire so much ghee and grains, along with so many other things. Daily you have to feed so many people. This is all very difficult in this age.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa has made *yajña* easy. As recommended in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.5.32],

kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ

What is the *yajña* for the present age? *Saṅkīrtana,* the congregational chanting of the holy names of God. This process was taught by the incarnation of God for the present age of Kali.

Now, one may ask, Who is the incarnation of God for the present age? The *Bhāgavatam* says, *kṛṣṇa-varṇam.* The word *varṇa* means "category." So *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* means that the incarnation for the present age is in the category of Kṛṣṇa, not in the category of the *jīva* soul. In other words, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Or, *kṛṣṇa-varṇam* can also mean "one who describes (*varṇayati*) Kṛṣṇa." So the incarnation who teaches *saṅkīrtana* is always describing Kṛṣṇa or chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, and He is Kṛṣṇa because He belongs to the category of Kṛṣṇa.

The *Bhāgavatam* also describes this incarnation as *tviṣākṛṣṇam,* "having a non-blackish complexion." But we know that Kṛṣṇa has a blackish complexion. He is described as *asitāmbuda-sundarāṅgam. Asita* means "black," and *ambuda* means "cloud." So His complexion is like a blackish cloud, but very, very, very, very beautiful. *Kandarpa-koṭi-kamanīya:* He is so beautiful that many millions of Cupids cannot be compared with Him.

So, although the incarnation who teaches *saṅkīrtana* is the same as Kṛṣṇa, His complexion is not blackish. Then may He be any color except blackish? No. There are fixed colors for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the greatly learned astrologer Garga Muni performed the birth ceremony for Kṛṣṇa at Nanda Mahārāja's place, he said, *śuklo raktas tathā pīta idānīṁ kṛṣṇatāṁ gataḥ:* "Nanda Mahārāja, formerly this son of yours appeared three times with three different colors—white, red, and yellow. Now He has appeared in a blackish color." Therefore the incarnation for the present age must be either white, red, or yellow.

So, the complexion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is a yellowish golden color. Also, He is always describing Lord Kṛṣṇa and chanting His name, and He is in the the same category as Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is understood that He is the incarnation for the present age.

Next the *Bhāgavatam* says, *sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam:* "He is always surrounded by His associates and expansions." *Aṅga*

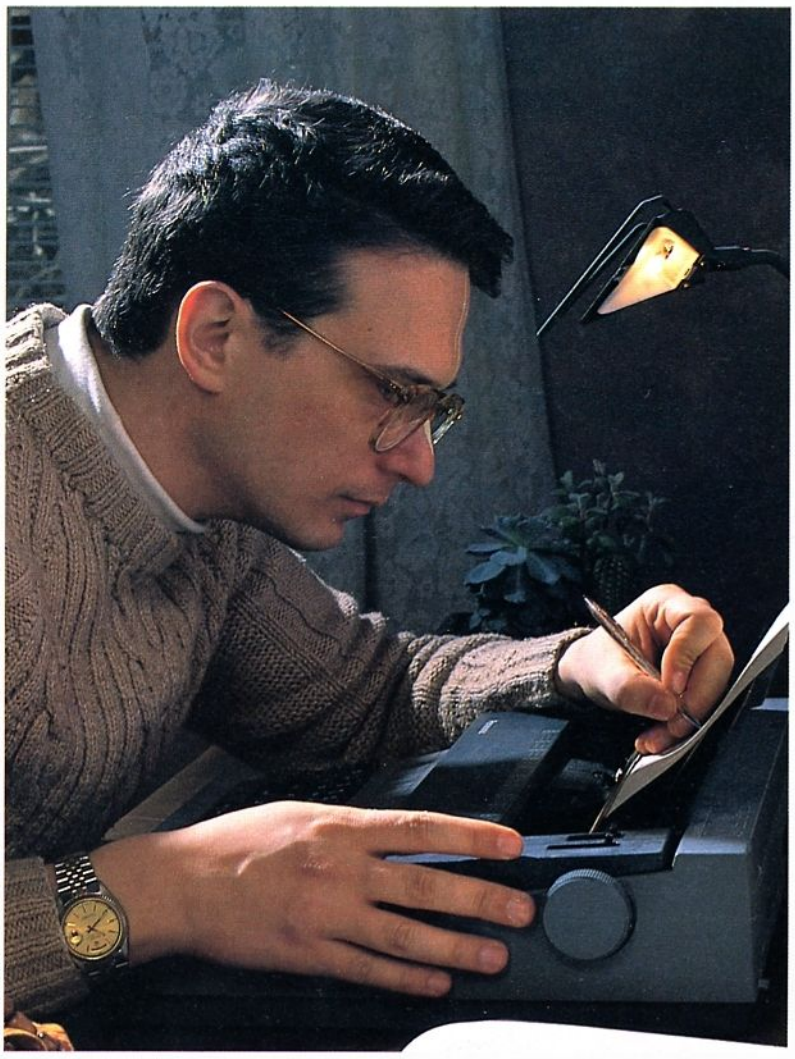
(*continued on page 20*)

Coming to Kṛṣṇa

The Agni And the Ecstasy

"I considered myself a sort of Renaissance man in my own right. But through reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's profound works, I came to understand what I really wanted to pursue."

by SATYARĀJA DĀSA



Marino A. Gallo

July 10, 1975. It was a beautiful summer day. Although I was an exuberant twenty-year-old, I had no qualms about staying indoors on this occasion. I was being initiated into the ancient tradition of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

I had been working toward this for some time. When I joined the movement in 1973, my intention was to make a short experiment. I had just read Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, *Experiments With Truth,* and I romanticized how I would experiment in a similar way.

Also, just before joining the movement, I had read Irving Stone's *Agony and the Ecstasy,* a fictionalized account of Michelangelo's life. I was fascinated by the great Renaissance man's resolve to paint the Sistine Chapel upon the request of Pope Sixtus IV. Michelangelo's work as a painter for the Pope necessitated a

mood of surrender, for he considered himself primarily a sculptor.

I had fancied myself something other than a devotee of God. I was a musician, an artist, and somewhat of a scholar. So I considered myself a sort of Renaissance man in my own right. But through reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's profound works—translations of and commentaries on the ancient Vedic literature—I came to understand what I really wanted to pursue: God's mission in this world.

Before coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I had read that religion originated in the East. *Yoga* groups and meditation centers back in America, while popular, did not satisfy my urge for a way of life that was completely spiritual. I took a short trip to India but returned dissatisfied. Traditional Hinduism seemed too dogmatic, with its many gods and family-based caste distinctions. Nonetheless, I knew that Hinduism had its roots in the Vedic literature, and I became interested in this *source* of spiritual truth.

Knowing that the *Vedas* were written in Sanskrit, I decided to enroll in a Sanskrit course at Queens College in New York. If I could learn the language, I reasoned, then I could interpret the texts for myself, and I wouldn't have to rely on the commentaries of popular *yogīs* and *svāmīs*.

My professor was using Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. I had read many editions of the *Gītā*, but only after reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's version was I aware that Kṛṣṇa is God Himself and that the plurality of gods for which Hinduism is so infamous is a fairly recent innovation. For me, this was an important revelation: the religion upon which Hinduism rests is strongly monotheistic!

I was also surprised to learn that caste distinction as interpreted by the British—and most modern Hindus—has little to do with what is actually taught in Vedic texts. While the popular misconception holds that one fits into a specific caste according to birthright, the *Vedas*—and especially *Bhagavad-gītā*—teach that one's *quality* and *work* determine one's social position. A person is considered a *brāhmaṇa*, for instance, by virtue of his being an intellectual, not because he is born to a *brāhmaṇa* father. This is clear from the Sanskrit texts themselves. So my Sanskrit course helped me see the logic of the Vedic literature and the accuracy of Prabhupāda's translation and commentary.

More important for me, however, was the realization that Prabhupāda was not only delivering *Bhagavad-gītā* "as it is," but was indeed espousing original Vedic culture as it is. I knew this was what I had been looking for.

As I became more familiar with the Sanskrit language and the ancient Vedic tradition to which it belongs, I became convinced of Śrīla Prabhupāda's authenticity. I felt compelled to visit his Hare Kṛṣṇa center in New York City, which was listed in the back of my *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Luckily, on a rainy spring day in 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda was lecturing at the Henry Street temple in Brooklyn. It was my first visit to the temple, and although Śrīla Prabhupāda was always traveling, he was there on that day. I understand now that this arrangement was Kṛṣṇa's mercy on me, because, being quite a skeptic, no one short of Śrīla Prabhupāda himself could have convinced me of the validity of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Although I came with a battery of questions regarding metaphysical reality and ontological truth, I didn't walk away disappointed. I was astounded by Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture. Without my asking, he had answered all my questions—and then some!

Although I came with a battery of questions, I didn't walk away disappointed. I was astounded by Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture. Without my asking, he had answered all my questions—and then some!

Still, I maintained a healthy skepticism. The scriptures advise that one apply logic and reason in the pursuit of truth. So for a full year I studied Śrīla Prabhupāda's books closely, visited the temple, and asked questions. I adopted the basic practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: I started chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* on beads every day, and I avoided meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling.

Seeking happiness, I had formerly indulged in all of these activities. But somehow, I knew, true happiness was eluding me, no matter how successful I was in enjoying my senses. In retrospect, I think that my prior indulgence served to reinforce my resolve, for despite my sensual gratification, I was becoming less and less happy. Although I was engaging in sinful life to numb the pain of material existence, it just wasn't working. Rather, I was becoming more and more entangled. The very activities I thought were bringing me pleasure and freedom were actually the source of my misery and bondage. I was embracing as the cure that which causes the disease.

In the beginning I faltered quite a bit. But as I became more steady in following the basic rules, I could feel my consciousness becoming purified. It gradually became easier to lead a purer life. Nonetheless, although things were becoming "easier," they were still a challenge, and I didn't know if I had what it takes to make a lifetime commitment. Despite this period of uncertainty, however, my experiments became more and more serious.

In 1974, I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture at the Ratha-yātrā (Festival of the Chariots) in San Francisco. After the lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda sang and danced with the devotees in glorification of God. He was happy, and everyone who watched him knew it. Here, I thought, is someone who practices what he preaches. This event solidified my faith in the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I knew then and there that Śrīla Prabhupāda was my spiritual guide and that I would one day be initiated by him. Whatever my reservations, I knew I had to make a commitment. If I didn't, I would be selling myself short.

As I became a more dedicated follower, I went out and distributed Śrīla Prabhupāda's books on a daily basis. I wanted to share this treasure that had somehow been bestowed upon me. To this end, I joined the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Saṅkīrtana Party, a team of devotees who were absorbed in distributing his literature and message to the world.

* * *

February 28, 1975, was a cold day in Atlanta, Georgia. We had traveled there to meet with Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was arriving from a successful lecture tour of Caracas and Miami. I was one of some three hundred enthusiastic devotees—both old and new—who were there to greet Prabhupāda. Although many of us were uninitiated, we had made a serious commitment, and there was talk that initiations would be forthcoming, perhaps six months away.

For the next four days, we heard Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture every morning, expounding the basic philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with unexcelled clarity and precision. Prabhupāda knew that his explanations of the fundamentals would help his young novices preach to those whom they would meet on book distribution. By hearing Prabhupāda explain the fundamentals in such a masterful way, I developed confidence in my own ability to convey the same truths to others.

During those early-morning winter lectures in Atlanta, an interesting phenome-

non would occur on a daily basis: As I wanted to develop a more intimate relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda, I would plan out several deep philosophical questions before his lecture. I had hoped that after his talks I would have the opportunity to ask these questions and revel in the spiritual exchange. Without my asking, however, he would invariably answer my questions during his lecture. Sometimes I would even purposely think of questions that had no relation to the daily topic. But the questions were always answered.

By the fourth day, I was certain that this was more than mere coincidence. I was confident that, as my spiritual master, he knew my mind even better than I. As if in confirmation of this, after his lecture, he turned to me (I was sitting only a few feet away!) and said, "Are all questions answered?"

In response, I sat there with my mouth hanging open. Of course, it was not uncommon for him to say this at the end of his lectures, but in this instance he looked right into *my* eyes. It was fully appropriate, and for me it had very special meaning.

Before Śrīla Prabhupāda was to leave Atlanta and we were to continue our travels throughout the country distributing his books, Tamal Krishna Goswami, the leader of our party, asked Śrīla Prabhupāda if he would like to meet each of us. Wanting to give us special encouragement, Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed.

Though I had seen Prabhupāda on several occasions, regularly listened to his tapes, and carefully studied his books, this would be the first time I would actually meet him. I was nervous and excited. While this meeting would be important and certainly pleasurable in many ways, I knew that it would deepen my commitment to the spiritual path. That prompted a sense of fear. Was I ready? The "agony and the ecstasy" motif entered my mind. Michelangelo wanted to sculpt, but in surrendering to the will of the Pope, he had sculpted a new life for himself as a painter.

My eternal spiritual father, whom I had acknowledged as such for a mere two years, was now going to enter my life in a more intimate and personal way. As our Rādhā-Dāmodara Party danced through the door to his room singing the names of Kṛṣṇa, I felt our relationship deepen—all of us as Godbrothers under our spiritual father, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

One after another we were introduced to Prabhupāda. We each offered him a fragrant flower, which he graciously accepted, and then we offered our prostrated obeisances. Prabhupāda smiled with great delight as Tamal Krishna Goswami explained to him our respective services.

"This is Tom," Tamal Krishna Goswami said. "He fixes the buses in which the devotees travel." Prabhupāda nodded approvingly. "This is Danny. He does the cleaning. Mike assists with the cooking. Bob distributes your books . . ."

"Oh?" Prabhupāda interrupted. "This is *very* nice!" It was clear that Prabhupāda had a preference for seeing his books distributed. All other services were valuable in that they assisted this one service of transmitting transcendental knowledge and love of God.

I was up next. Also a book distributor, I felt somewhat confident that Prabhupāda would be pleased with my service. "This is Steve," said Tamal Krishna Goswami, "and he distributes your books as well." No reaction. As I went to offer him the flower, I realized that the same phenomenon had occurred again. Since he had just expressed his delight with the previous book distributor, there was no need to say anything new to me. It was just like his answering my questions before I asked them.

Still, after a few moments, Prabhupāda looked up at me with folded hands and said, "Thank you very much." I immediately felt a spiritual reciprocation I had never felt before. He appreciated my

(*continued on page 26*)

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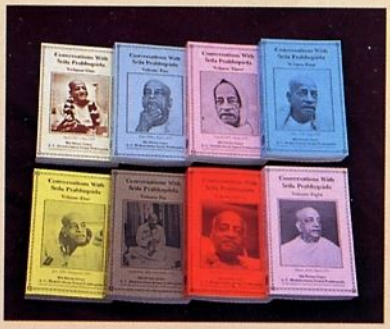

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Why do so many people
find it hard to think of God as a person?

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

by KṚṢṆA DHARMA DĀSA

Whenever the press runs articles about faith, the idea that God might be a person seems more or less abhorrent to the authors. Even those who may term themselves theists balk at the idea, offering all kinds of alternatives.

The *Guardian* (London) regularly prints a column dealing with different beliefs. In one article recently published, a professor of philosophy gave his opinion that it is time to discard the "old God concept of Western faiths. . . . We should now turn to the more intelligent philosophy of Advaita Vedanta." Another article, coming from a noted psychiatrist, speaks about the idea of God as being "irreconcilable with the reality of cruelty, misery and pain, . . . a dangerous word (God) in any sense, giving license to persecution and murder."

These are but a couple of examples of the confusion regularly exhibited in the column. The only thing common to the writers is that they all make the same mistake. They assume, somewhat conceitedly, that because they do not know anything about God, either nothing can be known, or at least no one else knows. "I can't understand how God could be a person; therefore He can't be." But perhaps they simply have not yet encountered that knowledge. After all, there are so many things we do not know, but we can learn about them by approaching a proper teacher.

Indeed, what are we coming to? Is it so difficult to understand the nature of God? There are so many simple yet profound arguments to help us

The order, beauty, and complexity of the universe suggest a personal creator. While some scientists say that the universe, with its endless variety, is the result of chance chemical reactions, others see only clear evidence of an original intelligent person.

PAINTING BY WARREN HILE
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understand. For instance, just as a watch obviously has a maker, so the universe, infinitely more complex than a watch, must also have a brain behind it. Or if God created man in the image of Himself, would that make God formless energy? Can we find even a single example of an act of creation not carried out by a person?

Nothing happens by chance; every thing follows the law of cause and effect. Even in probability theory the word *chance* cannot be properly defined. If I can perfectly repeat the conditions of a dice throw for the next throw, I will get the same number. We may not be aware of the variables, but something determines the result. Fixed variables, such as loaded dice, will fix the result. There must also be an ultimate cause of all causes, and just a little thought demands that it must be a person.

Consider: Can order arise from disorder without the influence of intelligence? Do material objects tend to decay, or do they restore themselves and grow? What is our experience? How can we say that the world, with its infinite, ordered intricacies, simply developed of its own accord from a vast cauldron of boiling "primordial soup"? Or funnier still—from a mass of exploding rock.

The universe is full of laws that cannot be broken. We must submit to time—grow old and die. Everything must disintegrate and form again into new objects. The sun rises and sets with perfect precision; the stars and planets similarly move. Can there be laws without a lawmaker? Again, what is our experience?

Nowadays we even hear the absurd proposal that we are all God. But can I honestly say that everything is controlled by me? Am I omniscient, even though I cannot see beyond the walls of the room I am in? How many hairs are there on my own head? Can I create even a single atom? Clearly there is a flaw in the suggestion that I am the Supreme Being, possessed of all and perfect knowledge.

Others offer the theory that, although we are now unaware of our Godhood, we will realize our supremacy upon attaining *nirvāṇa,* or some such state. We are now in illusion, but that will end when we are self-realized. But what is the meaning of our supremacy if we are overwhelmed by illusion or forgetfulness? If the force of illusion, whatever it may be, is greater than we are, how can we be supreme?

Obviously I am not supreme, but something must be. Even the most primitive people offer respects to greatness. Sometimes they worship the sky, sometimes mountains, oceans, and even the rainfall upon which all life depends. In any event, there is an acceptance of superiority;

(*continued on page 22*)

LETTERS

We welcome your letters. Write to
BACK TO GODHEAD
41 West Allens Lane
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

This letter is long overdue. Nevertheless, I would like to express my sincere admiration and praise to all of you for producing the wonderful magazine *Back to Godhead.*

I first came across this magazine about nine years ago by chance at home. I was immediately struck by the beautiful layout, the color pictures, and the articles. I had never seen any magazine so beautiful in my life. I was especially struck when I read one particular sentence—"There is more to life than eating, sleeping, mating, and defending." This sentence somehow kept ringing in my ears and spurred me (an otherwise agnostic) to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Since then I have read many, many BTGs, and I treasure every one of them. I look forward to receiving BTG every month. Thank you very much for producing this magazine. I am eternally indebted to all of you for bringing this useless fool to Kṛṣṇa consciousness by way of *Back to Godhead.*

Bhakta Sukumar
Singapore

* * *

I am writing in response to the article "Thorny Pleasure," by Ajamīḍha dāsa, in Vol. 23, No. 10. I have for many years been a seeker for Truth, and for the last year I have been a subscriber to *Back to Godhead,* as I thought within its pages I would find some direction in my journey back to God. Of all the splendid articles presented, "Thorny Pleasure" was the one that touched my inner consciousness the most profoundly. I would like to proffer my sincere gratitude to the author for all the article has done for me. Thank you.

K. Thomas
Wollongong, N.S.W., Australia

* * *

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.34) Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "For one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death." If a man who works in a highly respectable profession and who enjoys a very high reputation is dishonored and described in many unkind words by the people in the society, he may be convinced that death is better than this life. He may pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa to award him death. But if he does not die and instead continues to live this dishonored and humiliated life, what should he do? Should he commit suicide? And if he doesn't, then should he be criticized for living a dishonored life and not dying? Has Lord Kṛṣṇa drawn any line—that a person can pocket insult up to this level and after that he should commit suicide? When does the saturation state of dishonor come?

Professor A. K. Agarwal
Pennsylvania State University
Mont Alto, Pennyslvania

OUR REPLY: We have to understand this statement in the context of Lord Kṛṣṇa's reasoning with Arjuna at this point, in the Second Chatper of the *Gītā.* Kṛṣṇa is certainly not proposing that Arjuna commit suicide. He is simply encouraging Arjuna to fight in pursuance of his duty as a *kṣatriya.* In this verse Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that it would be better for him to die in the battle than to live after being dishonored for leaving the battlefield out of cowardice. Kṛṣṇa's telling Arjuna to fight in the battle—even if it means death for Arjuna—is certainly different from encouraging someone to commit suicide because his honor has been hurt. Nowhere does Kṛṣṇa recommend committing suicide.

At this point (in the Second Chapter), Kṛṣṇa is appealing to Arjuna's *kṣatriya* spirit. Later, however, Kṛṣṇa will speak to Arjuna on a higher, transcendental level. He will tell Arjuna that he should rise above the duality of the material world, which includes the desire for honor and the hatred for dishonor. In the Sixth Chapter, for example, Kṛṣṇa describes to Arjuna the importance of controlling the mind. He then says, "For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquillity. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same." In the Twelfth Chapter, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "One who is equipoised in honor and dishonor . . . is very dear to Me." And in the Sixteenth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa lists the divine qualities of godly men, ending with "freedom from the passion for honor."

As the *Bhagavad-gītā* progresses, Lord Kṛṣṇa's instructions to Arjuna become more and more sublime and confidential. As the ideal student, Arjuna was able to understand Kṛṣṇa's final instruction—that everyone must surrender unto Him. Because Arjuna did this—without considering honor or dishonor—he was successful. His real success was that he fought not to protect his own honor, but for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa.

In pre-*glasnost* days a veteran book distributor finds a way to get *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* to the Russians.

Three Days in Nicaragua

by LAVAṄGALATIKĀ-DEVĪ DĀSĪ

Yamarāja dāsa

After going through immigration at the Agosto de Sandino Aeropuerto at Managua, I stood in line to purchase $60 worth of *cordovas* (the local currency), which is required for anyone entering the city. Having been told, inaccurately, that everything is inexpensive in Nicaragua, I had brought only $200 in cash with me.

More important, I had two hundred copies of the Russian translation of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is,* by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. I had come to give them to Russian officials and professionals stationed in Managua. At that time, the winter of 1985, it was easier and safer to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to Russians outside the Soviet Union. The book had been newly published. I felt it was important to distribute as many copies as possible, because whenever *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* is translated into a new language, many new devotees of Kṛṣṇa are made.

In customs, a uniformed young lady confiscated my books. She said that customs would deliver them to the Russian embassy, but I insisted I would have to do it myself. Unfortunately, the administrator of customs had already gone home for the night, so she said I should come back the next day, as it would take that long for the books to go through the clearing house.

I took a cab and asked for the Hotel Central, the largest hotel near the airport and the only one I'd heard of. I had also been told that the rates were reasonable there. It was a very dark, humid night. The short ride on the bumpy, unlit road cost five hundred *cordovas,* more than $20. The hotel seemed to be empty, but they said they had no available rooms. It was just as well, since the rooms cost $75 a night. Obviously, I had come to the wrong place, so I took another taxi back down the dark, bumpy road that led to the city.

As I sat in the car, the surrounding darkness was suddenly fractured on all sides by explosions. It was not war but fireworks set off in celebration of the Fiesta de la Virgen de Nicaragua, a ten-day festival, my driver explained. In the yards of all the houses were little altars for the Virgin, with strings of lights and offerings of sweets, bananas, and flowers. People were visiting one another, and processions were being held. The scene reminded me of Diwali, the festival of lights in India.

I tried two more hotels, which were also full, and finally checked in at the Estrella Blana for $50 a night. It was a new hotel, modern and clean, and in the lobby stood a statue of the Virgen de Nicaragua, smiling sweetly on an altar draped with red and green lights.

Finally, in my room after a long, hot day, I went to take a shower, but turning the faucet produced not a drop of water. The shower held only a tiny baby scorpion crawling on the tiles. When I called the front desk, they told me that on Tuesdays and Thursdays there was no water in Managua until 10:00 P.M. I'd have to wait two hours.

Next morning, while chanting on my beads, I heard outside my door, "*Zdrastuite.*" I could hardly believe it—Russian!

I opened the door to find an elderly lady talking to a young man. I had one book that I had kept in my handbag, so I gave it to her. I told her it was book about Indian culture, including history and *yoga,* and

that it was the favorite book of Mahatma Gandhi. She was delighted. We spoke briefly. She told me she was an engineer and that the American blockade of Nicaragua had made life very difficult there. If I accomplish nothing else while I'm here, I thought, delivering this one book makes this whole journey worthwhile.

I soon had to move to a cheaper hotel to conserve my money. Taking another taxi, I asked the driver where the downtown area was. He told me that in Managua there is none. With my limited Spanish, I learned that in 1972 a *tierra moto,* or earthquake, had destroyed everything, killing thousands of people. There had not been enough money to rebuild, and there was fear of building high-rise structures in the same place. Instead, clusters of low buildings appeared, a few of which were luxury developments.

Throughout the area, however, were stretches of wasteland covered with piles of rubble overgrown with grasses and junglelike vegetation. The surroundings were very disorienting. People stood in long queues for milk, meat, or buses, which were very infrequent. There were also many open trucks carrying people on the pothole-filled road. A big sign by the road read, "*Ne le falta a la Patria*"—"Don't let your country down."

The actual city center was a newly-built covered market with rows of stalls, some piled high with fruits, including bananas and enormous papayas. There were also shoe shops. The peasant vendors were mostly women with long black braids, jeweled earrings, and colorful clothing.

My next hotel was the ruin of a former mansion and was run by a Lebanese family that had settled there. The banisters were broken, the carpet and curtains were torn, the wallpaper had peeled off, the windowpanes were broken, and the ill-fitting doors and floorboards creaked. I seemed to be the only guest, but neither this fact nor the shabby appearance of the place were reflected in the price—$35 a night. Still, I had to wait there until the next day, when I could try to get my books from the customs administrator.

I ate a papaya and later went for a walk. On one side was a residential neighborhood of well-kept houses and lawns—mostly embassies. Young people in dark-green military uniforms could be seen about. In the other direction were empty lots overgrown with tropical grass. A friendly old lady spoke to me as I passed, commenting on the irregularity of the buses.

The nearby cafe had no milk, and two boys started to follow and tease me, so I returned to my run-down hotel room and locked myself in for the night.

In the morning I went straight to the customs office to claim my books. A small group of people, also waiting to get their things out of customs, were making jokes about the inefficiency of the government. It seemed that, in general, people were not afraid to speak their minds under the Sandinista regime, and that the paranoia pervading the Eastern Bloc countries was absent.

After a short wait I was called to see the administrator. He was a young man, as most Sandinista officials seemed to be, and was very helpful. He signed the paper necessary for me to collect my books, and there was no red tape, no bribes, no corruption. I simply located my books in the customs shed and paid a small fee, equivalent to fifty cents, to the cashier.

I was then left with $50, some *cordovas,* and two hundred *Bhagavad-gītās* to distribute. I would have to distribute all of them that day, since I was to leave on the next.

The driver was there, and a man was seated in the rear. Full of confidence, I approached them smiling, book in hand. But the man in the back shot forward, slamming the sliding door in my face and yelling "Bbi xodit!"—"Get out!"

First I went to the Russian embassy and handed a book to anyone I met on the grounds on my way to the building. The First Secretary appeared and put a stop to the initial rush of eager takers. He asked my name and why I was passing out the books. He said I should give the rest of the books to him and he would distribute them himself. I figured it was about time to leave.

I returned to the covered market and this time found several Russian shoppers, who gladly accepted books. The taxi driver helped me locate other Russian shoppers. Our operation attracted much attention—the market vendors even wanted books, so I promised I would bring Spanish editions on my next visit. Since I was giving the books away, my exchanges with these people produced a mutual feeling of good will. In the parking lot was a Volkswagen van that had brought the Russians. The driver was there, and a man was seated in the rear. Full of confidence, I approached them smiling, book in hand. But the man in the back shot forward, slamming the sliding door in my face and yelling "*Bbi xodit!*"—"Get out!"

We then drove a long way from town to a hotel where some Russian professors were staying. It was run by an American who had married a Nicaraguan girl. He had lived there for fifteen years. I left a small stack of books with the management for later distribution, as I couldn't get to see the professors.

On the way back to Managua at dusk, we gave a lift home to Jaime, one of the waiters from the hotel. He told us it normally took him four hours to go home by bus. He also complained about how it cost him the equivalent of $40 to buy a pair of pants. He lamented about how nice things used to be in the good old days before these "bastards" (Sandinistas) had ruined everything.

I was surprised to hear the last comment, because in the "good old days," a few years before, the dictator Somoza used to feed his prisoners to his pet panthers. It seems people can never be satisfied. In the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda, "The whole world is running after happiness, but there is none. The foolish animal will run after water in the desert where there is no water. The whole material civilization is like this. This is the place of suffering, and you are seeking after happiness."

Śrīla Prabhupāda also said that people are transformed into thieves when they plan economic development for sense gratification, failing to recognize Kṛṣṇa as the proprietor of everything. A ruler should be a representative of God, so that the people can automatically be blessed with all the material resources needed to support spiritual life.

After arriving back at the Estrella, I decided to distribute a bag of books to some Russian doctors who lived nearby. I stumbled in the dark along the uneven dirt path that connected their houses. A young couple invited me in to sit down and talk. In the same neighborhood, however, a heavily built woman stood at her door watching my every move, as if to say I had already gone too far.

That was my last night. Back at the hotel lobby, I sat and waited near the brightly lit statue of the Virgin of Nicaragua to see if any more Russians would walk by. A

(*continued on page 22*)

This series systematically explains some of the important philosophical concepts that form the foundation of the Vedic culture and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

LESSON EIGHT: Mantra Meditation

by PAVANEŚANA DĀSA

PART I: The Sanskrit word *mantra* means "to free the mind" from illusion. The soul can be compared to a jewel lying on the bottom of a lake. If the waves of the mind are being agitated by illusion, the water picks up mud, and the jewel cannot be seen. But if the surface of the water is calm, the jewel can be clearly seen on the bottom. Similarly, if the mind is liberated from the waves of illusion and ignorance, the pure soul will be reflected by the mind like the jewel in the calm lake.

Mantra meditation can free the mind from illusion because the *mantra* is a spiritual sound, unlike common, material sounds. The word *water,* for example, describes an object, but the word *water* is not identical with the

object water. If you are thirsty, you may say "water" as many times as you like, but that won't quench your thirst. You have to obtain the water and drink it. The word *water* does not have any thirst-quenching potency.

A *mantra*, however, has inherent power. It is not meant to describe a separate object; the *mantra* itself produces the result.

There are many kinds of *mantra*. In former times, various *mantras* were used to obtain different results from sacrifices. Today, *mantras* are being advertised and sold for purposes ranging from "becoming God" to "improving one's money-making abilities."

In the Vedic literature we find a wealth of information on *mantras*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which deals with the essence of spiritual life, rejects materially motivated religion. It therefore rejects the chanting of a *mantra* for purposes other than spiritual upliftment.

In the *Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa* we find a very specific injunction about selecting the best *mantra:* "In this age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa."

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is specifically mentioned in the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad:* "After searching through all the Vedic literature, one cannot find a method of religion more sublime for this age than the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare."

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 7.11) states, "The fundamental religious system in the age of Kali is the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa."

One might ask, "Is there anything wrong with other *mantras*?"

If a *mantra* has been invented or pieced together from other *mantras*, it simply won't have any effect. If it is sold for someone's personal gain, or received by someone who is materially motivated, it won't work either. There may be effects like relaxation or stress reduction, but there will not be the transcendental effect of liberation from material bondage. In other words, there won't be a permanent spiritual effect, but at best a temporary effect on the material body or mind.

Spiritual development is not cheap. Slogans like "Everybody has his own way," "All roads lead to Rome," "It is all a matter of my own intuition," "We are all God," "Any *mantra* is just as good as the other," and so on are only an indication of ignorance of the direct way to "Rome." If someone wants to go to Rome, he must purchase a ticket for Rome.

The Vedic scriptures provide guidance for the quickest and most effective means of self-realization or God consciousness. The *Vedas* describe that so-called spiritual activities which disregard authorized scriptures are an unnecessary disturbance in society. Furthermore, it is stated in the *Padma Purāṇa* that if one is not properly instructed by a bona fide spiritual authority, the *mantra* one might have received will not have any effect.

Besides the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, there are many other bona fide *mantras* used by devotees of Kṛṣṇa. But the Vedic scriptures declare that simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* one receives the benefits of all other *mantras*. Therefore, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is the most important spiritual activity.

What about other types of spiritual practices besides *mantra* meditation? According to the *Vedas*, there is a continuous cycle of four ages, with each age manifesting particular material and spiritual characteristics. In each age a particular process for self-realization is recommended:

Nowadays many persons advocate silent meditation. The Bhagavad-gītā specifically stipulates the necessity for complete freedom from sex desire for one who wants to perform silent meditation.

In Satya-yuga, when people are all spiritually inclined and live a very long time, the recommended method of self-realization is meditation. In Tretā-yuga, the spiritual quality of the people is diminished by twenty-five percent. The predominant process of self-realization is the performance of elaborate sacrifices. In Dvāpara-yuga, characterized by half divine and half demoniac qualities, self-realization is achieved by worshiping the Deity in the temple. And in Kali-yuga, the present age, divine qualities are steadily declining toward an entirely materialistic and demoniac civilization. The only effective method for self-realization is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

This is confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.3.52): "Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by serving the Lord's lotus feet can also be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*."

Nowadays many persons advocate silent meditation. This requires the withdrawal of the senses from all objects, complete concentration, and freedom from all bodily and mental disturbances. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.13–14) specifically stipulates the necessity for complete freedom from sex desire for one who wants to perform silent meditation.

These conditions were easily fulfilled in Satya-yuga, the golden age, the age for which this process was recommended. People were by nature spiritually inclined. There were no factories, no pollution, no stress, and hardly any disease. The climate was ideal, and nature provided fruits, grains, and vegetables abundantly. The atmosphere was peaceful, and people lived long lives.

If we look at our present age, Kali-yuga, however, we find a situation extremely unfavorable for such meditation. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.10) provides us with an accurate description of the characteristics of this age: "In this iron age of Kali men have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky, and, above all, always disturbed."

Now just imagine someone trying to meditate by withdrawing his senses from all external objects. The whole day he is bombarded by advertisements designed to agitate his senses. Everywhere there are noises from cars, radios, sirens, and airplanes. His whole education has been focused on principles of sense gratification—make money so that you can enjoy.

While he is sitting and trying to meditate and forget his body, he is being painfully reminded of a lifetime of material advancement. Aches and pains from lack of exercise, from the ingestion of innumerable chemicals, and from bad eating habits disrupt his meditation. If he conquers these obstacles, his mind is tirelessly racing through millions of topics, preventing his concentration. After battling all these obstacles, he faces the danger of simply falling asleep.

The *Vedas* do not recommend silent meditation for our present age because it is practically impossible to execute successfully. The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, however, works on a different principle. Instead of withdrawing the senses from all objects, we engage them actively in a spiritual way. This is much easier and more practical.

Instead of not hearing anything, we hear the transcendental sound of Kṛṣṇa's

name. Instead of not touching anything, we touch the chanting beads. Instead of not seeing anything, we can look at a picture of Kṛṣṇa. Instead of not saying anything, we engage our tongue in vibrating the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. In this way the senses are fully spiritually engaged.

Silent meditation requires a special solitary place, whereas chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa can be done anywhere—at home, in the park, or even in an airplane. There are no rigid rules for this chanting. Noises and other sense objects cannot easily distract a serious chanter, since his senses are already fully occupied with the *mantra.*

> Although Kali-yuga is full of faults, there is still one good quality about this age. It is that simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra,* one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom.
>
> —*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.3.51

The Technique of Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa

There are two ways of chanting. One is called *japa,* and the other is called *kīrtana. Kīrtana* is congregational chanting, often accompanied by traditional Vedic instruments, and *japa* is individual chanting.

Anyone can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Education, age, or financial status don't matter. The chanting is free and can be done successfully by children, adults, or old people.

The best time for *japa* is in the early morning hours, when the atmosphere is still quiet and the mind is not yet preoccupied with daily activities. If that is not possible, any time will do. Simply repeat the *mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—softly but distinctly. You should pronounce the *mantra* in such a way that you can hear it clearly.

Devotees chant with beads, both for counting and to help their concentration. Hold your beads in your right hand, between the thumb and middle finger, beginning after the big center bead. Chant the *mantra* once on each bead. By the time you get back to the big bead, you will have chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* 108 times. This is called one "round." Then turn the beads around and start the second round. (Don't go over the center bead, which is known as "the Kṛṣṇa bead.") In the beginning, one round may take you fifteen minutes or so. When you get used to the chanting, however, you will probably chant one round in six to eight minutes.

You can begin with one round a day and gradually increase. Initiated devotees in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement chant sixteen rounds every day. This takes about two hours. Once you chant a certain number of rounds daily, never go below this number. It is far better to chant two rounds every day than eight rounds one day and none the next. Regulation is important in making spiritual progress.

The main principle of chanting is to listen attentively to the sound of the *mantra.* The *mantra* is chanted by the tongue and immediately caught by the ear. If any distracting thoughts come into your mind, just focus your full attention on the sound of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra,* and the thoughts will leave. Just try to hear the *mantra,* and the purifying effect will take place.

(To be continued.)

Cooking with KŪRMA

Anugha dāsa

Based on the three-part videotape series *Cooking With Kūrma,* produced by ISKCON Television (ITV)*, this column features the gourmet recipes and authentic Indian techniques of ISKCON's famous Australian chef Kūrma dāsa.

Laḍḍu

(Makes 12–15 sweets)

Ingredients

½ to ¾ cup butter
1 cup sifted chickpea flour (can be obtained at an Indian grocery)
¾ cup sifted powdered sugar
⅛ teaspoon cardamom powder

1. Melt the butter in a heavy frying pan over a medium flame.
2. Sprinkle in the chickpea flour while stirring with a wooden spoon. Continue to stir until the mixture turns golden brown and gives off a nutty aroma.
3. Remove from the flame, add the powdered sugar and cardamom, and mix thoroughly, being careful to break up any lumps.
4. When cool enough to handle, roll the mixture into walnut-size balls. Cool thoroughly and offer to Kṛṣṇa.

Puruṣārtha dāsa

* For information about ITV, see "Resources" on page 25.

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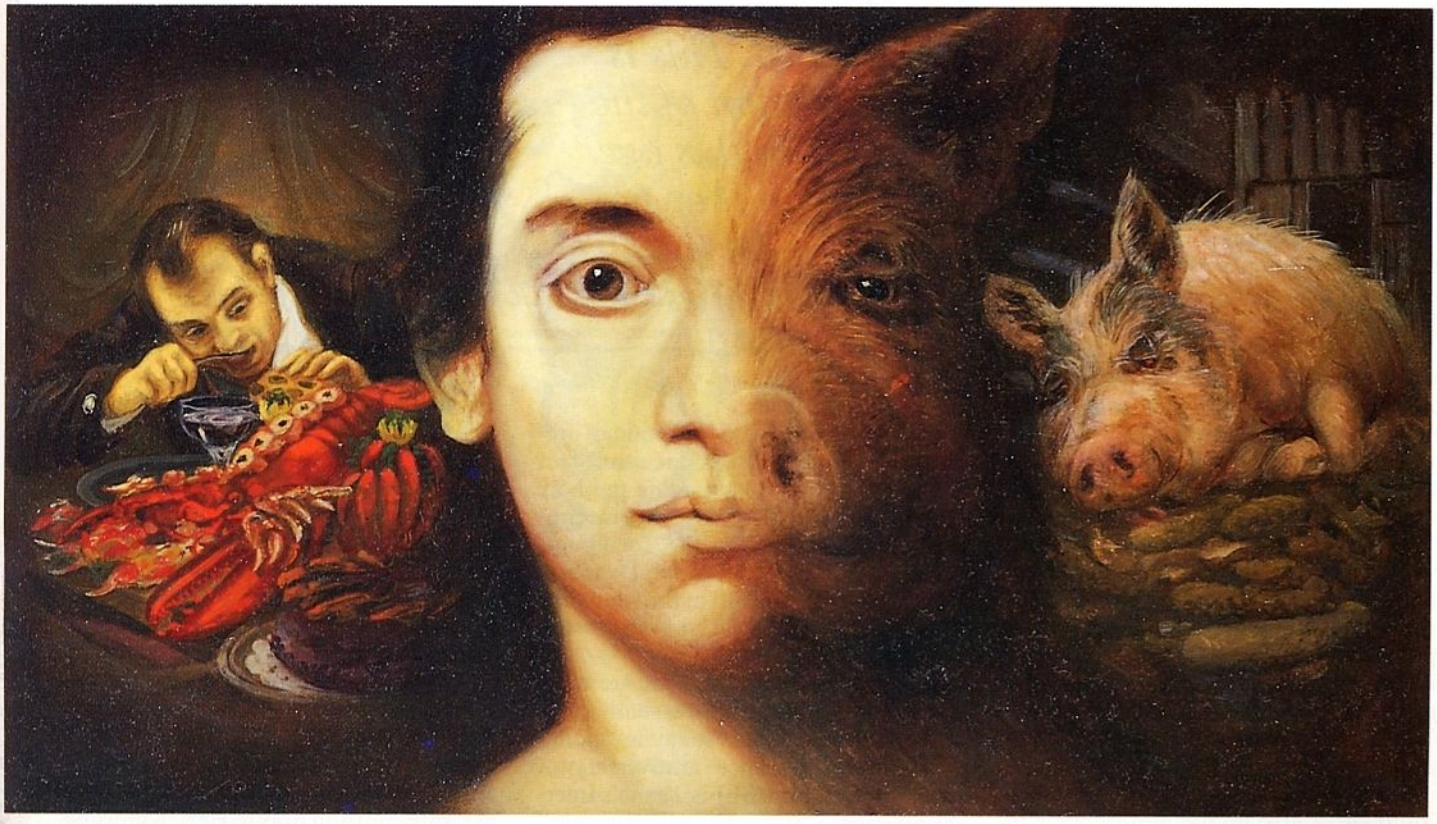
Santa Cruz, Bolivia—Snack Govinda, Av. Argomosa (1° anillo), esq. Bolivar

Transmigratio

One's thoughts and actions in the present life will deter
For example, if one likes to eat meat, one may get the body of a t
takes pleasure in exposing one's body, one may get the body
weather. Or if one likes to sleep excessively, one may get the
"Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his b



on of the Soul

ermine the type of body one will receive in the next life.
a tiger. If one is gluttonous, one may get the body of a pig. If one
dy of a tree, which must stand without clothing in all types of
ne body of a bear. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.6),
s body, O son of Kuntī, that state he will attain without fail."

SACRIFICE

(*continued from page 4*)

means "immediate expansion," and *upāṅga* means "an expansion of the expansion," which is also known as a *kalā.* The first expansion is called an *avatāra,* and when there is another *avatāra* from the first *avatāra,* He is called a *kalā.* Lord Caitanya appeared with His immediate expansion, Nityānanda Prabhu, and with the expansion of the expansion, Advaita Prabhu, and also with Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and many other devotees (*gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*). Therefore Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has all the symptoms of the incarnation for the present age.

There is a very scientific analysis of God in the *śāstras.* It is not that any rascal can come and declare, "I am God." This is not acceptable. We have to understand God according to the *śāstra.* Because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared like an ordinary man, Nimāi Paṇḍita, but was actually shown to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, so many rascals have imitated Him: "Well, if Nimāi Paṇḍita can become an *avatāra,* why not Gadadhara Chatterjee?" Ramakrishna's name was Gadadhara Chatterjee. He imitated Caitanya Mahāprabhu. But where is the reference in the *śāstra* that he was God? As far as Caitanya Mahāprabhu is concerned, there are innumerable references proving that He is God—in the *Mahābhārata,* the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* the *Upaniṣads.* Therefore we accept Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is not that by some rascal's vote we can declare some ordinary man as God, and then he becomes God.

So, one may ask, How should we worship Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu? The *Bhāgavatam* says, *yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ:* "Those who are intelligent worship Lord Caitanya by the process of *saṅkīrtana,* the congregational chanting of the holy names." Those whose brains are filled up with cow dung cannot understand the importance of the *saṅkīrtana-yajña.* But those who have nice brain substance will perform this sacrifice. In this way they fulfill the Lord's injunction in the *Bhagavad-gītā: yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyam.* "Sacrifice, charity, and austerity should never be given up."

Saṅkīrtana is the sacrifice for this age. You cannot give up the performance of sacrifice at any stage of life, but the sacrifices mentioned in the *Vedas* are not possible in this age of Kali. As the *Bhāgavatam* says, *mandāḥ su-manda-matayo manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ:* In this age people may advertise that they have made so much progress, but they are misguided, lazy, unfortunate, and disturbed. This is the position of the people in this age. How can they perform Vedic ritualistic ceremonies? It is not possible.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa has given us the opportunity to perform the *saṅkīrtana-yajña.* In the temple, if you keep a picture of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates and perform *saṅkīrtana* before them, you will become all-perfect; it is so easy.

It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [12.3.52]:

> *kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ*
> *tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ*
> *dvāpare paricaryāyāṁ*
> *kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

In this age people may advertise that they have made so much progress, but they are misguided, lazy, unfortunate, and disturbed. This is the position of the people in this age. How can they perform Vedic ritualistic ceremonies? It is not possible.

"The same result one could obtain in previous ages by other means, one can obtain in this age simply by chanting the holy names of God." In the Satya-yuga the process was meditation, in the Tretā-yuga, elaborate sacrifice, and in the Dvāpara-yuga, Deity worship. But in the Kali-yuga it is simply *saṅkīrtana.* This is the śāstric injunction.

So, I am very pleased that you are keeping this center nicely up to our standard by performing *saṅkīrtana.* Today is Rādhāṣṭamī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. She is Kṛṣṇa's internal pleasure potency. Kṛṣṇa can expand Himself. So when He wants to enjoy, He manifests His pleasure potency from His body, and that pleasure potency is Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī is not an ordinary living entity: She is Kṛṣṇa's personal pleasure potency, *ahlādinī-śakti.*

Rādhārāṇī's only business is to please Kṛṣṇa, and this should be our only business also. *Saṁsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam:* "Your perfection is to please Kṛṣṇa." And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [15.15] Kṛṣṇa says, *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ:* The whole of Vedic literature is meant for searching out Kṛṣṇa and satisfying Him.

Kṛṣṇa personally comes to give you this information: *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja.* "You rascal! Just give up all other engagements and surrender to Me." And what about the demigods? There are so many demigods. Should we worship them? Kṛṣṇa says, *kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ:* "The demigods are worshiped by persons who have lost all intelligence." There is no need to worship the demigods. As Kṛṣṇa says, *māṁ ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja:* "Simply surrender unto Me alone." That is the śāstric instruction.

So, Kṛṣṇa can be worshiped through Rādhārāṇī. Therefore we don't keep Kṛṣṇa alone on the altar. No. We worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. First you have to worship Rādhārāṇī. In Vṛndāvana all the devotees address one another, "*Jaya Rādhe!*" Why? Because they know that if Rādhārāṇī is pleased, Kṛṣṇa will also be pleased. Rādhārāṇī is the original pleasure potency of Kṛṣṇa and is always absorbed in thought of Him. So when someone comes before Her to serve Kṛṣṇa, She becomes so pleased—"Oh, here is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa." Immediately She recommends, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, here is a devotee of Yours. He is better than I am." This is Rādhārāṇī's mood.

I may not be a devotee—I may be the most fallen rascal—but if I try to reach Kṛṣṇa through Rādhārāṇī, then my life is successful. Therefore we should worship Rādhārāṇī first. Instead of directly offering Kṛṣṇa a flower, just put it in the hands of Rādhārāṇī: "O mother Rādhārāṇī, please kindly take this flower and offer it to Kṛṣṇa."

"Oh," Rādhārāṇī says, "you have brought a flower for Kṛṣṇa. This pleases Me so much." Kṛṣṇa says, *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam:* "One can please Me with a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or some water offered with love." But don't offer it to Kṛṣṇa directly. Just offer it through Rādhārāṇī. Then She will appreciate it very much, and Kṛṣṇa will accept your offering.

So, this is our philosophy: to please Kṛṣṇa through Rādhārāṇī. And today is the auspicious anniversary of Her appearance. Therefore you should offer flowers to Rādhārāṇī and pray to Her, "Kindly be merciful and tell Your Kṛṣṇa about me." Kṛṣṇa is not independent; He is Rādhārāṇī's property. So you have to approach Kṛṣṇa through Rādhārāṇī. Therefore worship Rādhārāṇī very nicely and be happy.

Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

THE VEDIC OBSERVER

Transcendental Commentary on the Issues of the Day

JOY OF MICROWAVING?

by Patricia Allard
Philadelphia

The microwaveable hot-fudge sundae—if it's not already available in your local supermarket, it will be soon, no doubt. Why? Because some of us *want* it.

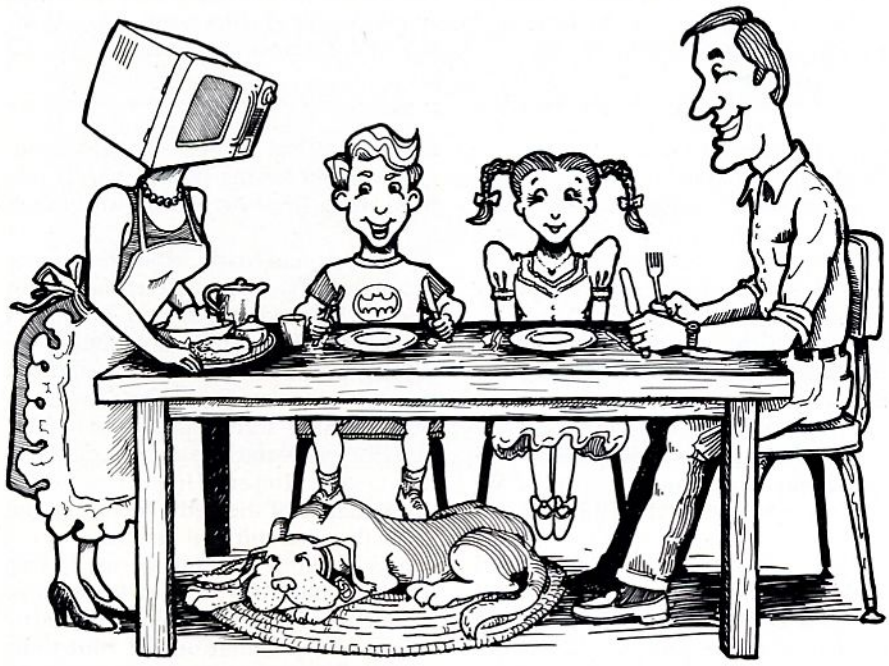
The health effects of microwaved food are often the subject of colorful debate, but the propelling motive behind the introduction of custom-designed microfoods is obvious: it's a matter of convenience. Preparing dinner seems a drudgery to most of us these days. We want to bypass the slicing, dicing, spreading, and baking. We're fixed on the only pleasurable aspect of the cooking event we remember: eating.

Arriving home from work, we can whip up a special microwave feast of double-cheese pizza, French fries, vanilla milk shake, and Dutch chocolate supreme bundt cake in a minimal nine minutes and thirty seconds. The only labor involved is in opening and closing the microwave oven door. "Ready in minutes!" "Easy!" and "Gets you out of the kitchen fast!" are attractive product descriptions that reflect the demand for instant gratification.

Devotees of Kṛṣṇa aren't after instant gratification, but that doesn't mean the amenities of modern technology can't have a place in their lives too. We welcome simplicity and efficiency as we create delicious dishes for the enjoyment of Kṛṣṇa, who has provided all the fruits, grains, vegetables, dairy products, and spices.

Still, although a devotee may use a variety of utensils to prepare a festive offering for Kṛṣṇa, he's not so anxious about cutting his labor down to forty-five seconds on High, for the time he spends in the kitchen is an expression of his love for Kṛṣṇa.

After the devotee presents Kṛṣṇa the cuisine with devotion, he eats the purified offering, thus satisfying his spiritual and physical hunger. A person attempting to become God conscious eliminates the drudgery of cooking by remembering the significance of preparing a meal for his supreme father.



DRAWING BY KEŚĪSŪDANA DĀSA

POPCORN'S PROGNOSIS

by Sthita-dhī-muni dāsa
Los Angeles

Social trends are currently moving toward traditional family values. Ms. Faith Popcorn (that's really her name), president and founder of BrainReserve, a Manhattan firm specializing in detecting consumer trends, attributes America's return to Mom-and-Pop ethics to a backlash from the excesses of the recent past. The fear of AIDS is the coup de grâce, prompting a return to stable, long-term relationships. But in a Philadelphia *Inquirer* interview, Ms. Popcorn warns that as soon as an AIDS cure is discovered, "There's going to be such a major sexual revolution out there it's going to make the seventies look like nothing. People will be dissolving marriages; they'll be running around; they'll be doing . . . everything possible."

While the accuracy of Ms. Popcorn's prediction remains to be seen, her observations hint at an undeniable aspect of the nature of living beings: our attraction for excitement and pleasure cannot be repressed. Vedic literature describes the pursuit of happiness as the prime symptom of man's individual, spiritual consciousness. Since we eternally yearn for pleasure, the trick is to strive for rewarding engagements that will not leave us—and our society—with a crushing material hangover.

Constant repetition quickly turns even the most stimulating activities dull and stale. So modern society has developed the desperate habit of latching on to one fad after another, endlessly replacing last year's car with this year's sleeker version. A current example: Sixty years ago it was enough to repeal the constitutional amendment prohibiting whiskey and beer; now there's debate over the legalization of cocaine and marijuana.

One may wonder, Since society does not encourage the pursuit of spiritual achievement, why not just go whole hog for sense pleasure? Why have any restrictions at all?

Indeed, puritanical moralizing falls short in keeping most people content. To effectively discourage disruptive social activities, a more enticing substitute must first be offered. The Vedic literature gives insight into a superior pleasure inherent in our eternal, spiritual identity. As explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.21), "A liberated person is not attracted to material sense pleasure but is always in trance, enjoying the pleasure within. In this way the

self-realized person enjoys unlimited happiness, for he concentrates on the Supreme." Thus, the most desirable spiritual experiences are achieved by those who reawaken the soul's eternal relationship with the Supreme Soul, commonly known as God, who in His most attractive form is known in Sanskrit as Kṛṣṇa.

In this regard, there's a famous quote from a Vaiṣṇava saint, Yāmunācārya, who says, "Since I have been engaged in the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa, realizing ever-new pleasure in Him, whenever I think of sex pleasure I spit at the thought, and my lips curl with distaste."

Since the highest pleasure in ordinary affairs is found in sex enjoyment, a materialist experiences despondency without its inspiration. But for a mature devotee like Yāmunācārya, the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa consciousness makes even the mere thought of sex enjoyment comparatively unpleasant and distracting. Yāmunācārya's regulated life wasn't just a defensive reaction to society's moral pressures, but a natural by-product of a happy life.

Convinced that a life of spiritual engagement is a happy life, the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement encourage others to chant the names of God, offer their food to Him with gratitude and love, and act for progressive devotional development. These are spiritual activities that men of all races, creeds, and nations can wholeheartedly take up for the gain of the individual and the entire human society. By these practices, even a spiritual neophyte can quickly loosen his attachments for frustrating worldly addictions.

If society could become as preoccupied with spiritual achievement as it is with scientific discoveries that lift sexual and other kinds of social restriction, not only would morality and the family remain secure for posterity, but a taste of real happiness could be achieved that previously could only be yearned for.

Nicaragua

(*continued from page 12*)

television was on in the lobby, and there was a movie about a birthday party in an American home. Children were singing "Happy Birthday," and the parents were smiling. Just as the little boy was blowing out the candles on the cake, masked gunmen suddenly burst in and shot everyone dead. Then I watched black people getting beaten up by the police, kids taking drugs, robberies, muggings, drunks—one bizarre horror after another. Though it was obviously anti-American propaganda, I thought how, sadly, these scenes are in fact part of the documentary of life in the Western world.

Suddenly the TV stopped working. The picture tube had burned out.

I had thirty books left, which I had to take back to Costa Rica in my luggage. I also left some copies with the Russian woman I had met in the hotel to give to her friends.

On leaving Nicaragua, I was thinking what a good place it is to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because the people are very friendly, and they are inclined to religion and enjoy festivals. The people are poor but do not seem to be repressed by the Sandinista government. I managed to reach a few Russians, but here is a whole country waiting for the mercy of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement.

SPEAKING

(*continued from page 10*)

there are things greater than I. This cannot be denied. The force of nature is greater, bringing transformation and death inevitably to all.

But what is the ultimate greatness? We see a beautiful painting and wonder—who painted it? But what about the original landscape? Who painted that? Rains fall, and the food by which we are nourished grows—a wonderful system. And yet no one engineered it? Great scientific brains struggle hard and yet fail to emulate even a small aspect of nature, such as the creation of a tiny amoeba.

Although I am not supreme, I still have the attribute of personality. I can think, feel, will, and desire. Could it be that I am capable of something of which God, the Supreme, is not?

These are all elementary arguments, and though they may not be all-encompassing in their logic, and though I have not addressed all the possible objections to them, an honest person will have to admit that they are sensible. Compare the simple logical points of the theistic presentation with the complex and often barely intelligible arguments made to support atheism. Which seem more credible?

It is hopeless to speculate grandly and finally conclude that there are no answers to life's big questions. The real conclusion is that our brain power is insufficient to independently arrive at the answers. We have to accept the answers of the authority on these questions: scripture.

All the scriptures speak of God as a person. Dismissing this evidence, we enter the realm of personal conjectures and find that these are endless and without agreement. Although the subject of the Absolute Truth is the most profound area of study, everyone will offer his own theory about it. If, instead of going to law college, I decided to make my own laws and set up a legal practice, would anyone come to me? But anyone will speak about God without having studied hardly one word about Him. Are we foolish enough to listen?

As devotees of Kṛṣṇa, we are sometimes accused of having surrendered our intelligence to a fixed belief system. But hasn't the lawyer surrendered to a system by accepting the laws of the land, studying them, and then repeating them to his clients? We have accepted the obvious fact that God exists and have made it our business to study Him and His purpose, under the guidance of the Vedic literature and the authorized spiritual master.

It is certainly painful for us, having dedicated ourselves to a careful study of the science of God, to see people misled by the absurd postulations of part-time, speculative philosophers. Perhaps the press would be wise to examine the credentials of authors who offer opinion-forming articles in areas where they have little or no knowledge. They owe it to their readers.

NOTES

(*continued from page 36*)

eventually be able to retard the degenerative diseases and extend the human life span, that isn't the real problem. The latter part of life is significant not merely for trying to prolong sense pleasure, but it's the time that must be used—even if earlier years weren't fully used—for spiritual life. To spend the remaining days reminiscing and becoming fearful of approaching death, or thinking that one is useless in material society, is the greatest misfortune. The Vedic scriptures are teaching us that elderly people should be sane enough and brave enough to leave behind all material entanglements and concentrate on preparing themselves for what comes next—death and the next life.—**SDG**

Every Town And Village

The worldwide activities of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

North American Summer Festivals In Full Swing

Spanish Fork, Utah—In ten years, ISKCON's Festival of India, based here under the direction of Madhuhā dāsa, has put on 350 festivals in cooperation with temples and individuals throughout North America. The Festival of India is a traveling exhibition of the world of Hare Kṛṣṇa. It includes educational displays describing Vedic concepts such as *karma* and reincarnation, many beautifully decorated tents and booths full of spiritual paintings, photographs, gifts, *prasādam,* and books, and a portable stage and professional sound system. A huge tractor trailer carries it all.

Yamarāja dāsa

Festival grounds at the Ratha-yātrā/Festival of India, Venice Beach, Los Angeles.

The inspiration for the Festival of India came from Śrīla Prabhupāda, who wrote, "If we perform many festivals in all our centers around the world, many times during the year, then the general populace will become very much favorably inclined toward us, and that will push on the *saṅkīrtana* movement in the best way."

This year, the Festival of India began its summer of festivals in North America in grand style at the Westheimer Art Festival, held April 8–9 in Houston. Sārvabhauma dāsa of ISKCON Houston was able to obtain free use of a half-acre site for the Festival of India during the Art Festival. The site, facing the festival's main thoroughfare—and thus allowing tens of thousands of people to hear the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names—would normally have cost thousands of dollars.

From Houston, the Festival of India went to Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, then to California, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. The schedule for July and August is as follows: Taste of Chicago Festival (June 28–July 5); Montreal Ratha-yātrā (July 8–9); Toronto Ratha-yātrā (July 15–16); Detroit Festival of India (July 22–23); Los Angeles Ratha-yātrā (August 5–6); San Francisco Ratha-yātrā (August 13); Vancouver Ratha-yātrā (August 19–20); Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī (Vancouver, August 24–25).

Anyone who would like to introduce people to the cultural and philosophical roots of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement can sponsor a Festival of India celebration. For information, get in touch with Madhuhā dāsa, P.O. Box 801, Spanish Fork, UT 84660. Phone: (801) 423-2826.

Bhaktivedanta Manor Locked in Struggle

Letchmore Heath, England—Despite several attempts to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution with the Hertsmere Council, Bhaktivedanta Manor is locked in an intense struggle for its right to continue to function as a full-fledged ISKCON center. The Council hopes to stop all public use of the temple. An inquiry into the dispute is being conducted by the Department of the Environment, a central government ministry.

The Hertsmere Council has demanded that all visitations to the Manor cease. They have also demanded that the buildings not be used for "religious business storage," thus attempting to prevent the devotees from keeping Śrīla Prabhupāda's books on the premises.

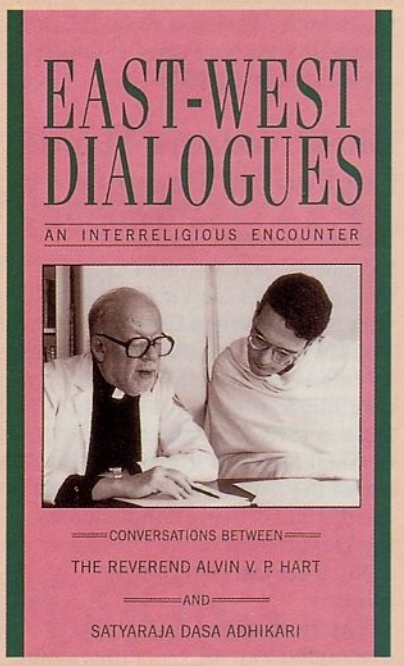
Bhaktivedanta Manor is the place of worship for thousands of Hindus in the London area. Devotees are gathering support from the Hindu community as well as from members of Parliament. World-famous Indian singer Anup Jalota flew in from India on Diwali to perform a benefit concert for the Save the Temple Campaign. About £40,000 was raised. In July Indian cricket star Sunil Gavaskar will take part in a ten-mile charity walk from Wembley to the Manor to raise money for the campaign.

The Department of the Environment will decide the future of the Manor later this year.

NEWS BRIEFS

Satyarāja dāsa, a frequent contributor to *Back to Godhead* [see

"The Agni and the Ecstasy" in this issue], has published a book of conversations between himself and the Reverend Alvin V. P. Hart, a noted Christian theologian and Episcopal priest. Reverend Hart is presently serving as chaplain and supervisor of clinical pastoral education at St. Luke's–Roosevelt Hospital in New York City.



The 105-page book, entitled *East-West Dialogues: An Interreligious Encounter,* contains edited excerpts from discussions between Satyarāja dāsa and Reverend Hart held over the last four years. "The lively and friendly interdisciplinary communication found within these pages," says Reverend Hart in the Introduction, "will have its greatest appeal in the hearts of those who seriously desire to understand their neighbors." Copies can be obtained from FOLK Books, P.O. Box 400716, Brooklyn, NY 11240–0716. The cost is $4.95 plus $1.00 for shipping and handling (add $2.00 for Canada and overseas).

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Guṇagrahī Goswami and Dānavīra dāsa, two of ISKCON's senior preachers, have started KRISHNAFEST, a traveling festival party of devotees dedicated to spreading Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement to every town and village. The program actually began forming in May of last year, with the devotees taking part in Festivals of India and Ratha-yātrās in New York, Atlantic City, Boston, Toronto, Ann Arbor, Dallas, Denver, San Diego, Guadalajara, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Vancouver.

KRISHNAFEST will often be working in conjunction with ISKCON's Festival of India. KRISHNAFEST emphasizes preaching through *harināma-saṅkīrtana,* book distribution, *prasādam* distribution, Kṛṣṇa conscious drama, and other aspects of Vaiṣṇava culture.

•

As a result of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, things are improving in Lithuania for Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. Lithuanian devotee Avadhūta dāsa says they now sometimes have the chance to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness "almost officially." In December the devotees held a program at the Palace of Trade Unions in Vilnius. The event was arranged by the Public Theater, headed by philosopher V. Kazlauskas. The devotees distributed Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and *kṛṣṇa-prasādam,* lectured about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, showed slides, and had discussions with the guests.

"The people have become really more interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and enjoyed our show very much," said Avadhūta dāsa. "We hope that despite the still-low standard of Soviet democracy, it wasn't our last official show."

•

Twenty-two ISKCON devotees from India and the West took part in the two-week Haridas Samelan, a gathering of devotees from various Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* (disciplic successions) held in Udupi, South India, last February. Udupi is the headquarters of the Madhvācārya-sampradāya.

Festivals & Calendar

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The devotees at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of the festivals listed here.

Month of Vāmana
(June 20–July 18)

July 3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

July 4—Guṇḍicā-marjana. Festival of the cleansing of the Guṇḍicā temple.

July 5—Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā in Purī, India. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

July 14—Śayanā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

July 18—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from spinach).

Month of Śrīdhara
(July 19–August 17)

July 23—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

July 26—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

July 28—Kāmikā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

August 13—Pavitraropanī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Jhulana-yātrā (swing festival) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda begins.

August 14—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

August 17—Jhulana-yātrā ends. Appearance anniversary of Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting. Also, second month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from yogurt).

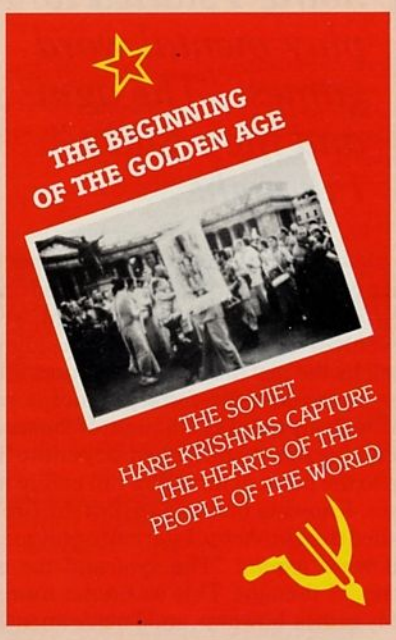
During a recent tour of India, fifty-nine Soviet Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees met with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi. The Soviet government allowed the devotees to visit India for two months and attend ISKCON's annual Māyāpur-Vṛndāvana festival in March. Look for more on the Soviet devotees' India tour in upcoming issues.

Vibhudeśa Tīrtha Swami, head of the principal temple in Udupi, invited the ISKCON devotees to the Samelan and served them *prasādam* and arranged for their accommodations. Each evening the ISKCON devotees danced enthusiastically and chanted the holy names of Kṛṣṇa before attentive crowds of residents and pilgrims.

RESOURCES

ISKCON Education. There are now two newsletters to help you keep up with education in ISKCON: *ISKCON Gurukula Newsletter* (practical information about teaching for schools, teachers, and parents; three or four issues a year), and *ISKCON Educational Journal* (a forum for exchange of ideas, opinions, and news about education and *varṇāśrama* in ISKCON; two or three issues a year). Subscribe to either or both for $5.00 for four issues. Write to the ISKCON Board of Education, 3764 Watseka Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90034.

The Beginning of the Golden Age, the success story of the Campaign to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas, is now available on videocassette. Narrated by Rod Young, television newsreader for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the documentary focuses on the efforts of a group of Hare Kṛṣṇa school children in Australia whose plea for the release of imprisoned Soviet devotees sparked a powerful campaign in Australia. To order,



send $19.95 (Australian dollars) to ISKCON, P.O. Box 83, Indooroopilly 4068, Q.L.D., Australia.

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In Australasia, write to ITV, P.O. Box 2329, Sydney, N.S.W. 2001, Australia.

Going to Bombay?

Visit the ISKCON cultural center—Hare Krishna Land, in beautiful Juhu Beach. A short ride from the Bombay airports, Hare Krishna Land features a gorgeous traditional Kṛṣṇa temple, together with a multistory modern guesthouse, Govinda's pure vegetarian *prasādam* restaurant, musical and theatrical performances in the 425-seat auditorium, and a sublime atmosphere of spiritual realization in the association of Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

For more information, inquire at your local ISKCON center or get directly in touch with ISKCON Bombay.

"At present, it seems the more 'educated' one becomes, the less he believes in God, in God's law, and in the next life. . . . Thus modern education prepares men to become animals. If there is no education to teach a human being whether or not he is this body, he remains no better than an ass." Read the complete compilation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's words on *gurukula,* the Kṛṣṇa conscious educational system. *Śrīla Prabhupāda on Gurukula* is available from the ISKCON Ministry of Education, P.O. Box 400767, Brooklyn, NY 11240. $3.50 plus $1 postage; $2 overseas postage.

Have a computer and modem?
Log on to the ISKCON Education BBS: (213) 837-9713. Daily: 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 A.M. Weekends: twenty-four hours.

Meditation

(*continued from page 7*)

service. And I appreciated his encouragement. In that moment I realized that I was in the presence of my spiritual father.

* * *

Four months passed. We were traveling throughout the U. S. delivering the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It was early July, and we were told that Prabhupāda would meet us in Chicago to formally initiate those of us who were true to our vows. Seventy-five young devotees would now strengthen their link with the Vedic tradition through the holy rite of initiation, and then we would all attend the 1975 Festival of the Chariots in Chicago.

Again we spent many mornings listening to Prabhupāda lecture from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* This time several hundred devotees gathered in the huge hall of the Evanston temple. Prabhupāda took this opportunity to expound on the life of Ajāmila, a sinful person who at the time of death had saved himself by calling out the name of God: "Nārāyaṇa! Nārāyaṇa!"

Prabhupāda enjoyed telling this story, for here the power of the holy name is evident. Ajāmila had named his son Nārāyaṇa, a name for God, and at the time of death Ajāmila called out for the boy with full sincerity. Because he called the name of Nārāyaṇa, he was saved from death and was given the chance to attain spiritual perfection. "Just see," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "This is the potency of the holy name. Even if chanted inadvertently, it has tremendous effect."

On the fourth day of Prabhupāda's Chicago lectures, another miracle occurred. After repeating Nārāyaṇa's name many times in telling the story of Ajāmila, Śrīla Prabhupāda fell into trance. This was something he rarely did in public. An intense silence engulfed the room. We all felt blessed to witness this transcendental phenomenon. Through purely calling out Nārāyaṇa's name, Prabhupāda was seeing Nārāyaṇa face to face. His trancelike state and his inability to speak lasted two minutes. Although I had read about the ecstatic symptoms of a pure devotee, I was amazed to see them. Those of us who were in the room will never forget his spiritually uplifting expression.

After two seemingly eternal minutes, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "All right. Thank you very much." He then gestured that *kīrtana* should begin, and one of the most intense chanting sessions I had ever experienced permeated the large hall.

Then came the initiation. Anticipation filled my heart. My imagination went wild. I pictured sages in ancient times taking part in similar ceremonies on the banks of India's holy rivers. Now I would have the good fortune to follow in their footsteps. I looked forward to the exotic and colorful initiation ceremony, which includes a purificatory fire sacrifice. I had imagined this in my mind's eye for many months. The room would be filled with smoke from the flames of the ancient Vaiṣṇava ceremony. I was familiar with the initiation procedure, for I had several months earlier been to the initiation of my senior Godbrothers. Each initiate would come before Śrīla Prabhupāda, who would give him or her a set of chanting beads and a spiritual name. This name is usually one of the names of Kṛṣṇa (or of one of His eternal associates) followed by the word *dāsa* (for men) or *devī-dāsī* (for women), both of which mean "servant." The name reminds the disciple that he or she is a servant of God.

> *My entire life up to the point of initiation ran before my eyes. Knowing that in Sanskrit the fire is called the agni-hotra, I started to play mental word games: "The agni and the ecstasy," I thought.*

Now my own initiation was about to take place. Śrīla Prabhupāda started calling devotees one by one. There were seventy-five of us, so my fear was alleviated by the fact that I was not alone. Still, the agony-and-the-ecstasy concept ran through my mind as I thought of the sacrificial fire soon to be ignited. My entire life up to the point of initiation ran before my eyes. Knowing that in Sanskrit the fire is called the *agni-hotra,* I started to play mental word games: "The *agni* and the ecstasy," I thought. This was not a time to play games, however, and I made an internal promise to be more serious.

The fire at such sacrifices is always a marvelous thing to behold. In this particular situation, however, I had mixed feelings. On the one hand, I could hardly wait for Śrīla Prabhupāda to call my name, so we could get on with the beautiful fire sacrifice. On the other hand, I was nervous as hell! The commitment of life-long dedication is frightening. But I knew that one can get out of Kṛṣṇa consciousness only what one is ready to put into it. I had made up my mind.

To ease my tension, I had enjoyed watching several of Prabhupāda's senior disciples spread colored dyes over the dirt mound in decorative crisscrosses just prior to the sacrifice. "What is actually being sacrificed?" I began to ask myself. Surely it was mainly my false ego, my false sense of proprietorship. I was now acknowledging that I am not God but, rather, His blissful servant.

"Ah, to be a servant of God," I thought, "—this is no ordinary thing."

No sooner was I thinking in this way than I heard someone call out my name. It was Tamal Krishna Goswami. He was calling me forward to be initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. I took a deep breath and approached Prabhupāda's seat. As he handed me the beads, he said, "Do you know the four rules?"

"Yes," I answered. "No intoxication, no illicit sex, no meat-eating, and no gambling." I had been practicing what to say so I wouldn't muff it.

"Correct," Prabhupāda said. "Follow these four principles and chant a minimum of sixteen rounds on your beads every day. Hare Kṛṣṇa." Then the moment I had been waiting for: "Your name is Satyarāja."

I immediately looked over at one of my traveling mates who knew Sanskrit better than I. "It means 'king of truth,' " he said. I looked back at Prabhupāda with a sense of pride. Yes, this is me—I am the king of truth!

Prabhupāda looked me squarely in the eyes and revealed the handy little affix: "Dāsa!"

I felt two inches tall. Here I was trying to remember that the real sacrifice was the sacrifice of my false ego, and Prabhupāda had shown me, by pausing before saying "dāsa," that I was still anxious to think of myself as something special. In short, I was inadvertently trying to be an imitation God. Prabhupāda had lectured many times explaining that *this* in fact is the very reason for our material existence: the endeavor to replace the Lord and be the central enjoyer of all we survey. Prabhupāda taught me a valuable lesson at the initiation by reminding me that I was merely a humble servant of "the king of truth."

As I walked away from his seat with my beads and new name—Satyarāja dāsa—I also walked away from the agony-and-the-ecstasy concept. The agony, I realized, was merely a product of my rebellion against God. Now, through Prabhupāda's grace, I realized that I am constitutionally a *servant* of God. So the agony was gone. As I watched the sacrificial fire burn away, I knew all that was left was ecstasy.

Book Section

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the "cream of the Vedic literatures" of ancient India. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. The original Sanskrit text is presented here with transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācāraya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Third Canto: "The Status Quo"

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
Conversation Between Manu and Kardama

In this installment of our continuing presentation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *the sage Kardama Muni welcomes Emperor Svāyambhuva Manu to his hermitage by glorifying Svāyambhuva as the representative of the Supreme Lord.*

TEXT 50

नूनं चङ्क्रमणं देव सतां संरक्षणाय ते ।
वधाय चासतां यस्त्वं हरेः शक्तिर्हि पालिनी ॥५०॥

nūnaṁ caṅkramaṇaṁ deva
satāṁ saṁrakṣaṇāya te
vadhāya cāsatāṁ yas tvaṁ
hareḥ śaktir hi pālinī

nūnam—surely; *caṅkramaṇam*—the tour; *deva*—O lord; *satām*—of the virtuous; *saṁrakṣaṇāya*—for the protection; *te*—your; *vadhāya*—for killing; *ca*—and; *asatām*—of the demons; *yaḥ*—the person who; *tvam*—you; *hareḥ*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *śaktiḥ*—the energy; *hi*—since; *pālinī*—protecting.

TRANSLATION

The tour you have undertaken, O lord, is surely intended to protect the virtuous and kill the demons, since you embody the protecting energy of Śrī Hari.

PURPORT

It appears from many Vedic literatures, especially histories like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Purāṇas,* that the pious kings of old used to tour their kingdoms in order to give protection to the pious citizens and to chastise or kill the impious. Sometimes they used to kill animals in the forests to practice the killing art because without such practice they would not be able to kill the undesirable elements. *Kṣatriyas* are allowed to commit violence in that way because violence for a good purpose is a part of their duty. Here two terms are clearly mentioned: *vadhāya,* "for the purpose of killing," and *asatām,* "those who are undesirable." The protecting energy of the king is supposed to be the energy of the Supreme Lord. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.8) the Lord says, *paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām.* The Lord descends to give protection to the pious and to kill the demons. The potency, therefore, to give protection to the pious and kill the demons or undesirables is directly an energy from the Supreme Lord, and the king or the chief executive of the state is supposed to possess such energy. In this age it is very difficult to find such a head of state who is expert in killing the undesirables. Modern heads of state sit very nicely in their palaces and try without reason to kill innocent persons.

TEXT 51

योऽर्केन्द्वग्नीन्द्रवायूनां यमधर्मप्रचेतसाम् ।
रूपाणि स्थान आधत्से तस्मै शुक्लाय ते नमः ॥५१॥

yo 'rkendv-agnīndra-vāyūnāṁ
yama-dharma-pracetasām
rūpāṇi sthāna ādhatse
tasmai śuklāya te namaḥ

yaḥ—you who; *arka*—of the sun; *indu*—of the moon; *agni*—of Agni, the fire-god; *indra*—of Indra, the lord of heaven; *vāyūnām*—of Vāyu, the wind-god; *yama*—of Yama, the god of punishment; *dharma*—of Dharma, the god of piety; *pracetasām*—and of Varuṇa, the god of the waters; *rūpāṇi*—the forms; *sthāne*—when necessary; *ādhatse*—you assume; *tasmai*—unto Him; *śuklāya*—unto Lord Viṣṇu; *te*—unto you; *namaḥ*—obeisances.

TRANSLATION

You assume, when necessary, the part of the sun-god; the moon-god; Agni, the god of fire; Indra, the lord of paradise; Vāyu, the wind-god; Yama, the god of punishment; Dharma, the god of piety; and Varuṇa, the god presiding over the waters. All obeisances to you, who are none other than Lord Viṣṇu!

PURPORT

Since the sage Kardama was a *brāhmaṇa* and Svāyambhuva was a *kṣatriya,* the sage was not supposed to offer obeisances to the King because socially his position was greater than the King's. But he offered his obeisances to Svāyambhuva Manu because as Manu, king and emperor, he was the representative of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is always worshipable, regardless of whether one is a *brāhmaṇa,* a *kṣatriya* or a *śūdra.* As the representative of the Supreme Lord, the King deserved respectful obeisances from everyone.

TEXTS 52–54

न यदा रथमास्थाय जैत्रं मणिगणार्पितम् ।
विस्फूर्जच्चण्डकोदण्डो रथेन त्रासयन्नघान् ॥५२॥
स्वसैन्यचरणक्षुण्णं वेपयन्मण्डलं भुवः ।
विकर्षन् बृहतीं सेनां पर्यटस्यंशुमानिव ॥५३॥
तदैव सेतवः सर्वे वर्णाश्रमनिबन्धनाः ।
भगवद्रचिता राजन् भिद्येरन् बत दस्युभिः ॥५४॥

na yadā ratham āsthāya
jaitraṁ maṇi-gaṇārpitam
visphūrjac-caṇḍa-kodaṇḍo
rathena trāsayann aghān

sva-sainya-caraṇa-kṣuṇṇaṁ
vepayan maṇḍalaṁ bhuvaḥ
vikarṣan bṛhatīṁ senāṁ
paryaṭasy aṁśumān iva

tadaiva setavaḥ sarve
varṇāśrama-nibandhanāḥ
bhagavad-racitā rājan
bhidyeran bata dasyubhiḥ

na—not; *yadā*—when; *ratham*—the chariot; *āsthāya*—having mounted; *jaitram*—victorious; *maṇi*—of jewels; *gaṇa*—with clusters; *arpitam*—bedecked; *visphūrjat*—twanging; *caṇḍa*—a fearful sound just to punish the criminals; *kodaṇḍaḥ*—bow; *rathena*—by the presence of such a chariot; *trāsayan*—threatening; *aghān*—all the culprits; *sva-sainya*—of your soldiers; *caraṇa*—by the feet; *kṣuṇṇam*—trampled; *vepayan*—causing to tremble; *maṇḍalam*—the globe; *bhuvaḥ*—of the earth; *vikarṣan*—leading; *bṛhatīm*—huge; *senām*—army; *paryaṭasi*—you roam about; *aṁśumān*—the brilliant sun; *iva*—like; *tadā*—then; *eva*—certainly; *setavaḥ*—religious codes; *sarve*—all; *varṇa*—of *varṇas; āśrama*—of *āśramas; nibandhanāḥ*—obligations; *bhagavat*—by the Lord; *racitāḥ*—created; *rājan*—O King; *bhidyeran*—they would be broken; *bata*—alas; *dasyubhiḥ*—by rogues.

TRANSLATION

If you did not mount your victorious jeweled chariot, whose mere presence threatens culprits, if you did not produce fierce sounds by the twanging of your bow, and if you did not roam about the world like the brilliant sun, leading a huge army whose trampling feet cause the globe of the earth to tremble, then all the moral laws governing the varṇas and āśramas created by the Lord Himself would be broken by the rogues and rascals.

PURPORT

It is the duty of a responsible king to protect the social and spiritual orders in human society. The spiritual orders are divided into four *āśramas*—*brahmacarya, gṛhastha, vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*—and the social orders, according to work and qualification, are made up of the *brāhmaṇas*, the *kṣatriyas*, the *vaiśyas* and the *śūdras*. These social orders, according to the different grades of work and qualification, are described in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Unfortunately, for want of proper protection by responsible kings, the system of social and spiritual orders has now become a hereditary caste system. But this is not the actual system. Human society means that society which is making progress toward spiritual realization. The most advanced human society was known as *ārya; ārya* refers to those who are advancing. So the question is, "Which society is advancing?" Advancement does not mean creating material "necessities" unnecessarily and thus wasting human energy in aggravation over so-called material comforts. Real advancement is advancement toward spiritual realization, and the community which acted toward this end was known as the Āryan civilization. The intelligent men, the *brāhmaṇas*, as exemplified by Kardama Muni, were engaged in advancing the spiritual cause, and *kṣatriyas* like Emperor Svāyambhuva used to rule the country and insure that all facilities for spiritual realization were nicely provided. It is the duty of the king to travel all over the country and see that everything is in order. Indian civilization on the basis of the four *varṇas* and *āśramas* deteriorated because of her dependency on foreigners, or those who did not follow the civilization of *varṇāśrama*. Thus the *varṇāśrama* system has now been degraded into the caste system.

The institution of four *varṇas* and four *āśramas* is confirmed herewith to be *bhagavad-racita*, which means "designed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead." In *Bhagavad-gītā* this is also confirmed: *cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam*. The Lord says that the institution of four *varṇas* and four *āśramas* "is created by Me." Anything created by the Lord cannot be closed or covered. The divisions of *varṇas* and *āśramas* will continue to exist, either in their original form or in degraded form, but because they are created by the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they cannot be extinguished. They are like the sun, a creation of God, and therefore will remain. Either covered by clouds or in a clear sky, the sun will continue to exist. Similarly, when the *varṇāśrama* system becomes degraded, it appears as a hereditary caste system, but in every society there is an intelligent class of men, a martial class, a mercantile class and a laborer class. When they are regulated for cooperation among communities according to the Vedic principles, then there is peace and spiritual advancement. But when there is hatred and malpractice and mutual mistrust in the caste system, the whole system becomes degraded, and as stated herein, it creates a deplorable state. At the present moment, the entire world is in this deplorable condition because of giving rights to so many interests. This is due to the degradation of the four castes of *varṇas* and *āśramas*.

TEXT 55

अधर्मश्च समेधेत लोलुपैर्व्यङ्कुशैर्नृभिः ।
शयाने त्वयि लोकोऽयं दस्युग्रस्तो विनङ्क्ष्यति॥५५॥

adharmaś ca samedheta
lolupair vyaṅkuśair nṛbhiḥ
śayāne tvayi loko 'yaṁ
dasyu-grasto vinaṅkṣyati

adharmaḥ—unrighteousness; *ca*—and; *samedheta*—would flourish; *lolupaiḥ*—simply hankering after money; *vyaṅkuśaiḥ*—uncontrolled; *nṛbhiḥ*—by men; *śayāne tvayi*—when you lie down for rest; *lokaḥ*—world; *ayam*—this; *dasyu*—by the miscreants; *grastaḥ*—attacked; *vinaṅkṣyati*—it will perish.

TRANSLATION

If you gave up all thought of the world's situation, unrighteousness would flourish, for men who hanker only after money would be unopposed. Such miscreants would attack, and the world would perish.

PURPORT

Because the scientific division of four *varṇas* and four *āśramas* is now being extinguished, the entire world is being governed by unwanted men who have no training in religion, politics or social order, and it is in a very deplorable condition. In the institution of four *varṇas* and four *āśramas* there are regular training principles for the different classes of men. Just as, in the modern age, there is a necessity for engineers, medical practioners and electricians, and they are properly trained in different scientific institutions, similarly, in former times, the higher social orders, namely the intelligent class (the *brāhmaṇas*), the ruling class (the *kṣatriyas*) and the mercantile class (the *vaiśyas*), were properly trained. *Bhagavad-gītā* describes the duties of the *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas* and *śūdras*. When there is no such training, one simply claims that because he is born in a *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya* family, he is therefore a *brāhmaṇa* or a *kṣatriya*, even though he performs the duties of a *śūdra*. Such undue claims to being a higher-caste man make the system of scientific social orders into a caste system, completely degrading the original system. Thus society is now in chaos, and there is neither peace nor prosperity. It is clearly stated herein that unless there is the vigilance of a strong king, impious, unqualified men will claim a certain status in society, and that will make the social order perish.

TEXT 56

अथापि पृच्छे त्वां वीर यदर्थं त्वमिहागतः ।
तद्वयं निर्व्यलीकेन प्रतिपद्यामहे हृदा ॥५६॥

athāpi pṛcche tvāṁ vīra
yad-arthaṁ tvam ihāgataḥ
tad vayaṁ nirvyalīkena
pratipadyāmahe hṛdā

atha api—in spite of all this; *pṛcche*—I ask; *tvām*—you; *vīra*—O valiant King; *yat-artham*—the purpose; *tvam*—you; *iha*—here; *āgataḥ*—have come; *tat*—that; *vayam*—we; *nirvyalīkena*—without reservation; *pratipadyāmahe*—we shall carry out; *hṛdā*—with heart and soul.

TRANSLATION

In spite of all this, I ask you, O valiant King, the purpose for which you have come here. Whatever it may be, we shall carry it out without reservation.

PURPORT

When a guest comes to a friend's house, it is understood that there is some special purpose. Kardama Muni could understand that such a great king as Svāyambhuva, although traveling to inspect the condition of his kingdom, must have had some special purpose to come to his hermitage. Thus he prepared himself to fulfill the King's desire. Formerly it was customary that the sages used to go to the kings and the kings used to visit the sages in their hermitages; each was glad to fulfill the other's purpose. This reciprocal relationship is called *bhakti-kārya*. There is a

nice verse describing the relationship of mutual beneficial interest between the *brāhmaṇa* and the *kṣatriya* (*kṣatraṁ dvijatvam*). *Kṣatram* means "the royal order," and *dvijatvam* means "the brahminical order." The two were meant for mutual interest. The royal order would give protection to the *brāhmaṇas* for the cultivation of spiritual advancement in society, and the *brāhmaṇas* would give their valuable instruction to the royal order on how the state and the citizens can gradually be elevated in spiritual perfection.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Third Canto, Twenty-first Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *entitled "Conversation Between Manu and Kardama."*

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
The Marriage of Kardama Muni and Devahūti

TEXT 1

मैत्रेय उवाच

एवमाविष्कृताशेषगुणकर्मोदयो मुनिम् ।
सव्रीड इव तं सम्राडुपारतमुवाच ह ॥ १ ॥

maitreya uvāca
evam āviṣkṛtāśeṣa-
guṇa-karmodayo munim
savrīḍa iva taṁ samrāḍ
upāratam uvāca ha

maitreyaḥ—the great sage Maitreya; *uvāca*—said; *evam*—thus; *āviṣkṛta*—having been described; *aśeṣa*—all; *guṇa*—of the virtues; *karma*—of the activities; *udayaḥ*—the greatness; *munim*—the great sage; *sa-vrīḍaḥ*—feeling modest; *iva*—as though; *tam*—him (Kardama); *samrāṭ*—Emperor Manu; *upāratam*—silent; *uvāca ha*—addressed.

TRANSLATION

Śrī Maitreya said: After describing the greatness of the Emperor's manifold qualities and activities, the sage became silent, and the Emperor, feeling modesty, addressed him as follows.

TEXT 2

मनुरुवाच

ब्रह्मासृजत्स्वमुखतो युष्मानात्मपरीप्सया ।
छन्दोमयस्तपोविद्यायोगयुक्तानलम्पटान् ॥ २ ॥

manur uvāca
brahmāsṛjat sva-mukhato
yuṣmān ātma-parīpsayā
chandomayas tapo-vidyā-
yoga-yuktān alampaṭān

manuḥ—Manu; *uvāca*—said; *brahmā*—Lord Brahmā; *asṛjat*—created; *sva-mukhataḥ*—from his face; *yuṣmān*—you (*brāhmaṇas*); *ātma-parīpsayā*—to protect himself by expanding; *chandaḥ-mayaḥ*—the form of the *Vedas*; *tapaḥ-vidyā-yoga-yuktān*—full of austerity, knowledge and mystic power; *alampaṭān*—averse to sense gratification.

TRANSLATION

Manu replied: To expand himself in Vedic knowledge, Lord Brahmā, the personified Veda, from his face created you, the brāhmaṇas, who are full of austerity, knowledge and mystic power and are averse to sense gratification.

PURPORT

The purpose of the *Vedas* is to propagate the transcendental knowledge of the Absolute Truth. The *brāhmaṇas* were created from the mouth of the Supreme Person, and therefore they are meant to spread the knowledge of the *Vedas* in order to spread the glories of the Lord. In *Bhagavad-gītā* also Lord Kṛṣṇa says that all the *Vedas* are meant for understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is especially mentioned here (*yoga-yuktān alampaṭān*) that *brāhmaṇas* are full of mystic power and are completely averse to sense gratification. Actually there are two kinds of occupations. One occupation, in the material world, is sense gratification, and the other occupation is spiritual activity—to satisfy the Lord by His glorification. Those who engage in sense gratification are called demons, and those who spread the glorification of the Lord or satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord are called demigods. It is specifically mentioned here that the *brāhmaṇas* are created from the face of the cosmic personality, or *virāṭ-puruṣa*; similarly the *kṣatriyas* are said to be created from His arms, the *vaiśyas* are created from His waist, and the *śūdras* are created from His legs. *Brāhmaṇas* are especially meant for austerity, learning and knowledge and are averse to all kinds of sense gratification.

TEXT 3

तत्त्राणायासृजच्चास्मान्दोःसहस्रात्सहस्रपात् ।
हृदयं तस्य हि ब्रह्म क्षत्रमङ्गं प्रचक्षते ॥ ३ ॥

tat-trāṇāyāsṛjac cāsmān
doḥ-sahasrāt sahasra-pāt
hṛdayaṁ tasya hi brahma
kṣatram aṅgaṁ pracakṣate

tat-trāṇāya—for the protection of the *brāhmaṇas*; *asṛjat*—created; *ca*—and; *asmān*—us (*kṣatriyas*); *doḥ-sahasrāt*—from His thousand arms; *sahasra-pāt*—the thousand-legged Supreme Being (the universal form); *hṛdayam*—heart; *tasya*—His; *hi*—for; *brahma*—*brāhmaṇas*; *kṣatram*—the *kṣatriyas*; *aṅgam*—arms; *pracakṣate*—are spoken of.

TRANSLATION

For the protection of the brāhmaṇas, the thousand-legged Supreme Being created us, the kṣatriyas, from His thousand arms. Hence the brāhmaṇas are said to be His heart and the kṣatriyas His arms.

PURPORT

Kṣatriyas are specifically meant to maintain the *brāhmaṇas* because if the *brāhmaṇas* are protected, then the head of civilization is protected. *Brāhmaṇas* are supposed to be the head of the social body; if the head is clear and has not gone mad, then everything is in proper position. The Lord is described thus: *namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca*. The purport of this prayer is that the Lord specifically protects the *brāhmaṇas* and the cows, and then He protects all other members of society (*jagad-dhitāya*). It is His will that universal welfare work depends on the protection of cows and *brāhmaṇas*; thus brahminical culture and cow protection are the basic principles for human civilization. *Kṣatriyas* are especially meant to protect the *brāhmaṇas*, as is the supreme will of the Lord: *go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca*. As, within the body, the heart is a very important part, so the *brāhmaṇas* are also the important element in human society. The *kṣatriyas* are more like the whole body; even though the whole body is bigger than the heart, the heart is more important.

TEXT 4

अतो ह्यन्योन्यमात्मानं ब्रह्म क्षत्रं च रक्षतः ।
रक्षति स्माव्ययो देवः स यः सदसदात्मकः ॥ ४ ॥

ato hy anyonyam ātmānaṁ
brahma kṣatraṁ ca rakṣataḥ
rakṣati smāvyayo devaḥ
sa yaḥ sad-asad-ātmakaḥ

ataḥ—hence; *hi*—certainly; *anyonyam*—each other; *ātmānam*—the self; *brahma*—the *brāhmaṇas*; *kṣatram*—the *kṣatriyas*; *ca*—and; *rakṣataḥ*—protect; *rakṣati sma*—protects; *avyayaḥ*—immutable; *devaḥ*—the Lord; *saḥ*—He; *yaḥ*—who; *sat-asat-ātmakaḥ*—the form of the cause and effect.

TRANSLATION

That is why the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas protect each other, as well as themselves; and the Lord Himself, who is both the cause and effect and is yet immutable, protects them through each other.

(*continued in next issue*)

WHAT ATTRACTS ME TO KṚṢṆA?

An answer to the question:
"Why is a good Christian like you worshiping a Hindu god?"

by RAṆACORA DĀSA

People often ask me why I changed my faith from Christianity to worship of Kṛṣṇa. They ask what made me give up Christianity. I am always quick to answer that I never "gave up" Christianity. The principal instruction Jesus gave was to love God, and I believe I can best do that by worshiping and serving Kṛṣṇa.

What is it that makes Kṛṣṇa more attractive or meaningful to me than the God of the Bible? Well, first of all, as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa I believe in only one God, and He is the same Supreme Person whether He appears in the Vedic scriptures of India or the Bible of the West, although He may be known by different names. So by worshiping Kṛṣṇa I don't reject the God of the Bible; I simply get to know Him from a different perspective.

The *Vedas* teach that God appears many times in this world in different places and different ages. Each time He comes for the same reason: to reveal Himself to His lost children and to lead them back onto the right path.

When Kṛṣṇa came into this world five thousand years ago, in northern India, He showed the symptoms of God Himself. Kṛṣṇa performed many supernatural feats and displayed many facets of His character, but He is best remembered for His childhood, as the darling son of Yaśodā, playing in the forest of Vṛndāvana with His friends.

I sometimes hear, "How can God be a cowherd boy playing in the forest?" But why not? Why should He be an old man in the clouds, as He is so often depicted in Western religious art. Can't He be an innocent and playful child?

In fact, isn't it logical to suppose that God, being eternal, without beginning or end, *never gets old*? Of course, *we* have to get old, because we are bound by the laws of birth and death. But not Kṛṣṇa—He is the one who made the laws, and He is not bound by them. When Kṛṣṇa was on earth, He never appeared to age beyond youth, although he lived here for 125 years.

Kṛṣṇa played in the forest as a child, surrounded by His devoted childhood friends. But He was not an ordinary child, and they were not ordinary friends. The Vedic scriptures say that only after many lifetimes of pious acts did those souls get a chance to play with Kṛṣṇa as children.

Once, Kṛṣṇa's friends complained to His mother that He had been eating clay. Kṛṣṇa denied the story, and so His mother asked Him to open His mouth. When Kṛṣṇa obeyed, Yaśodā saw the entire creation within it. She saw the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, as well as all living creatures and the rest of creation. She even saw herself with her son on her lap.

Seeing all these things, she became bewildered and confused and began to wonder who she really was and if Kṛṣṇa were actually her child. But then Kṛṣṇa, feeling sorry for her, closed His mouth, and she once more became overwhelmed with love for her beautiful son and forgot what she had seen. Yaśodā took Kṛṣṇa on her lap and began to feed Him just like an ordinary boy, convinced through love that He was actually her son and was dependent upon her for protection.

Who can fail to be attracted by the wonderful stories of Kṛṣṇa? Indeed, the name *Kṛṣṇa* means "all-attractive." He attracts everyone to Him, and He is easy to love. Later, when Kṛṣṇa spoke the famous *Bhagavad-gītā,* the essence of the Vedic scriptures, He made a special promise: anyone who becomes His devotee, surrendering his life fully to Him as His servant, will always be protected by Him. "Do not fear," Kṛṣṇa said. "I will free you from all your sins, and you will come to live with Me eternally."

To the amazement of His mother, Kṛṣṇa once opened His mouth and revealed the whole universe, thus showing that even though He plays the role of His devotee's darling child, He is still the Supreme Absolute Truth, the source of everything.

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Back To the Original Idea

Preaching Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in Communist Kerala

Text and illustration by
JAGANNĀTHA-KṚṢṆA DĀSA

The journey from Delhi to Trivandrum on the Kerala Express train was the most beautiful visual experience of my recent travels in India. I'd half-thought such natural beauty existed only in wildlife documentaries. Hour after hour of panoramic scenes of lush fields, steep, majestic mountains capped in thick fog, and archaic canals canopied by palm trees whizzed by to elicit "oohs" and "aahs" from this neophyte traveler.

The Trivandrum ISKCON temple, my first destination, was small and empty. Only the *pujārī* (priest) was there to greet me. Everyone else was out on *saṅkīrtana,* distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and preaching the philosophy of Lord Caitanya. I picked up a drum and sat down before the Deities to chant until lunchtime.

On my way to the temple from the station, I had noticed an alarming phenomenon: huge, brightly-colored icons of Stalin, Marx, Engels, and Lenin

Attesting to the piety of the people of Kerala, the traditional Kathakālī dance, which often depicts the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāmacandra, is still popular there, despite the state's Communist government.

littering every available bit of wall space. Everywhere I turned I saw enormous bulletin boards decorated with the Communist hammer and sickle.

"Isn't South India supposed to be the last remaining land of living Vedic culture?" I asked myself. "Isn't the Communist credo diametrically opposed to any form of religion or spiritual culture?" I was eager to discuss these gaping discrepancies with someone who understood Kerala.

Kerala has a Communist government. Boasting the highest literacy rate of any state in the country, Kerala is known not for industry or technology but for its religious and intellectual culture and its crops—pepper, cardamom, coffee, tea, peanuts, betel, bananas, and coconuts. Scores of famous and wealthy temples of Kṛṣṇa dot the map, and there is a long history of Christian missionary activity here. Yet it somehow seemed incongruous to me that Communism, and the commitment to staunch atheism it propounds, could flourish in such a religiously rich society.

I started surveying devotees and nondevotees alike to gain more understanding. Sarvaiśvarya dāsa, president of ISKCON Trivandrum, had the most insightful perspective: "Most Keralites have an illogical mental complex of intellectualism, religious piety, impersonalism, and Communism. It's a dangerous combination because they can quote any amount of scripture to support their position. Kerala is a poor state, so the Communist ideal—which in its original, Vedic form is actually good—is alluring to them. On the other hand, when we preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness effectively, with a scientifically satisfying foundation, they love it."

Yet without exception, all of the strangers I asked about this perplexing social atmosphere seemed blindly faithful or uninformed.

"What do you think about this 13th Annual Communist Congress?" I would ask them, taking advantage of the many party meetings held during my visit.

"Oh, yes. Marxism is good. I'm a Marxist," they would invariably reply.

"Do you also believe in God?" I'd pry.

"Oh, yes. I'm a Hindu."

"And what do you know of Marxism?" I'd ask.

Silence. I was not surprised, since I have seen that people often believe in something without knowing much about it.

I could see that faith, sometimes blind, was a constant. The only variable was the object: Kṛṣṇa or Stalin, Lenin or Christ. It seems that all of us—even the staunch atheists—are forced to accept someone as our master.

Sarvaiśvarya, a young *brahmacārī* (celibate student), is an expert manager and competent leader. The twelve or so devotees of the small Trivandrum temple are working hard to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They support themselves only by the distribution of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. They understand the need for a highly systematized and novel approach for attracting the Keralite intelligentsia to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is the only sane alternative to atheistic Communism's ideal of artificial classlessness.

The devotees of ISKCON Trivandrum have fashioned a unique and effective preaching strategy. It's called "Yoga for the Modern Age." Week-long seminars, erudite devotee-scholars elucidating the scriptural conclusions, intensive lectures soundly defeating misinterpretations of the ancient Vedic philosophy, and free *prasādam* (sanctified food) add up to a successful and persuasive presentation of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I could see that faith, sometimes blind, was a constant. The only variable was the object: Kṛṣṇa or Stalin, Lenin or Christ. It seems that all of us are forced to accept someone as our master.

Held throughout South India, the Yoga for the Modern Age program is a dynamic undertaking, with special appeal to students and the scientifically minded. Affecting the lives of thousands, the program has borne many ripened fruits. "After the courses, the participants can judge for themselves what is *guru* and what is God," Sarvaiśvarya says.

Here are some remarks from participants:

"I am enlightened by the courses, and I now understand that I am not this body but a spirit soul. For acquiring knowledge we have to accept a spiritual master, and the best *yoga* is obviously *bhakti.* Kṛṣṇa is clearly the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and in Kali-yuga [the present age of quarrel], the highest religious activity is *nāma-saṅkīrtana,* the chanting of the holy names of God."— C. Gopinatha, Calicut bank manager.

"I request you to conduct this course again and again."—P. Baskaran, Government Model High School principal.

"As Christians we appreciate your giving spiritual knowledge in its original form. We hope that you'll conduct courses like this in the future in our town of Alleppey. We want to learn more about the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the *Purāṇas,* and so on." —P. O. Paul and V. D. Joseph, secretaries, Cooperative Urban Bank of India.

Sarvaiśvarya has also masterminded an installment scheme for selling Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in mass quantities. The results have mushroomed, since many more people, though normally unwilling to spend much money on a handsomely-bound book, can afford the minimal monthly fees. The devotees distribute thousands of pieces of literature monthly. Fifty percent of all profits are reinvested in a bank account used for the publication of more books in the local language, Malayalam.

For the kids, too, there is Kṛṣṇa conscious learning and excitement. Every year during Vedic holidays the devotees organize schoolwide "rolling trophy" awards for the best artwork depicting various pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. There is also a "Vipra" competition to select the most scripturally learned students. The competition is steep. Questions like "From whom did Rāvaṇa acquire the ability to fly (*puṣpaka-vimāna-siddhi*)?" could stump even senior Vaiṣṇava scholars. And in the "Rasa" competition, children compete for the "Best Dressed" award, their elaborate costumes revealing the grandeur of Vedic history. Participation in these diverse programs keeps everyone remembering Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes.

Every day, all day long, bright-faced children carrying schoolbooks and lunch boxes visit the ISKCON temple to honor Kṛṣṇa's *prasādam* and *caraṇāmṛta* (bathing water), shouting, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare!" at the top of their lungs. With attractive smiles and polite demeanor, they ask for small photos of Kṛṣṇa with a calendar printed on the back. Thus even they have a chance to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness to their family and friends.

Wherever I walked in Kerala, beaming children ran up to me, greeting me with folded hands and an enthusiastic "Hare Kṛṣṇa! *Namaskāram,* Swami!" I was reminded of how Śrīla Prabhupāda said that you could test an entire pot of rice by the condition of a single grain. From the children, I could understand that South India, and especially Kerala, is still a very civilized place, where God consciousness is still revered and spiritual culture could prevail.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

The Demoniac Way of Life

This is the conclusion of a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and some of his disciples in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, on June 26, 1976.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So those who are devoted to the Lord believe they'll become happy by seeing others becoming happy.

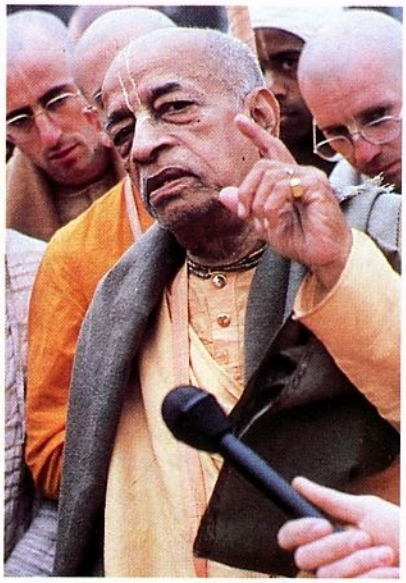
[*To disciple:*] Read the next verse.

Disciple [*reading from* Bhagavad-gītā *16.11–12*]**:** "The demoniac believe that to gratify the senses is the prime necessity of human civilization. Thus until the end of life their anxiety is immeasurable. Bound by a network of hundreds of thousands of desires and absorbed in lust and anger, they secure money by illegal means for sense gratification."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "Illegal." Read the purport.

Disciple: "The demoniac accept that the enjoyment of the senses is the ultimate goal of life, and this concept they maintain until death. They do not believe in life after death, and they do not believe that one takes on different types of bodies according to one's *karma,* or activities in this world. Their plans for life are never finished, and they go on preparing plan after plan, all of which are never finished. We have personal experience of a person of such demoniac mentality who, even at the point of death, was requesting the physician to prolong his life for four years more because his plans were not yet complete. Such foolish people do not know that a physician cannot prolong life even for a moment. When the notice is there, there is no consideration of the man's desire. The laws of nature do not allow a second beyond what one is destined to enjoy.

"The demoniac person, who has no faith in God or the Supersoul within himself, performs all kinds of sinful activities simply for sense gratification. He does not know that there is a witness sitting within his heart. The Supersoul is observing the activities of the individual soul. As it is stated in the *Upaniṣads,* there are two birds sitting in one tree; one is acting and enjoying or suffering the fruits of the branches, and the other is witnessing. But one who is demoniac has no knowledge of Vedic



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scripture, nor has he any faith; therefore he feels free to do anything for sense enjoyment, regardless of the consequences."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Now discuss.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, one of America's richest men, Howard Hughes, just recently died. And reportedly he had been keeping himself in a very disheveled and pathetic condition, with long hair and beard and long nails. There were sores all over his body. So despite all his billions of dollars, he died quite miserably. Just before he left his body, he lamented, "I think I've made a mistake."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What had he done in his life?

Disciple: In his younger days he designed and raced airplanes. And he flew around the world to help establish commercial air routes. Later he gained control over Trans World Airlines.

In addition, he ran huge machine-tool and aircraft companies and treated other companies—other people, really—quite ruthlessly. After World War II, Congress held an investigation in which they proved he had bribed government officials to give weapons contracts to him. Now it has also come out that in 1968 he requested the newly elected Nixon Administration to keep the Vietnam war going. His weapons were of course killing thousands of people, but he just couldn't stop. He was making too much money.

Besides all that, he produced and directed movies. In the 1930s and 1940s he helped introduce "sexploitation" films, with actresses wearing very revealing clothing. And he had many affairs, too, with all sorts of movie starlets. At the end of his life he didn't mix with women so much, though. He became depressed, utterly despondent. He lived like a hermit and was extremely afraid of germs.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Hm?

Disciple: He became like a hermit. He withdrew into himself. No one knew very much about him. He was very mysterious. And toward the end, he didn't at all have what we would call a life of sense gratification. He maintained a staff of doctors and clinicians to protect him from death. He spent his last days haunted by fear.

Bhagavad-gita's description of the demoniac is perfect. Most of Hughes's fortune they figure he amassed by illegal methods, such as paying off government officials to give big contracts to, for instance, his aircraft company.

He had holdings in Las Vegas and was involved in all sorts of mysterious maneuvers. It appears he got much—if not most—of his money illegally.

So gradually he became more and more fearful of the outside world, until in his old age he became terrified of germs. He was deathly afraid he would catch some disease that would do him in. As a result, he arranged to live within hermetically sealed rooms, with artificially filtered air and light, so that no germs could enter, and he would wear specially de-germed clothing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Apparently he did not realize that he was breeding germs within his own body.

Disciple: Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Even with all his billions of dollars, he could not escape death. He used unlimited quantities of money to get rid of germs, but it was all a failure.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. If he had actually gotten rid of the germs, then how was it that he died?

[*Extended silence.*]

Disciple: He supposedly said something to the effect that "I have achieved so many things in this life. But I really don't know what this life was all about. I think I've made a mistake."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, it was a mistake.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Is Old Age Inevitable?

An article in *The Times of London,* entitled "Slowing Down the March of Time," gave an update on research at an institute of experimental gerontology. According to a spokesman, "Some enigmas of aging are beginning to be unraveled by remarkable advances in medical research. . . . Growing old, in the traditional sense, is not inevitable. We are already developing ways to counter it." The author goes on to say that although research has been going on for a century, specific factors that cause aging "remain frustratingly elusive." But aging is a crucial problem, because the aging populations, sometimes known as "gray-haired societies," are dramatically increasing:

> The extra demand on health and social services, as well as the need to find treatments for diseases of old age—particularly *senile dementia*—will be enormous. Hence the urgency of the question: "What causes us to grow old?"
>
> . . . Medical advances in the past few decades have largely thwarted many of the traditional killers of the elderly, such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, and influenza. In their place have come other diseases—not new, but camouflaged by the previous limits of the average life span: cancer, heart disease, *senile dementia,* and other degenerative conditions. As life expectancy increases, Hodkinson says, it is not the fear of death that overshadows our last years but the anxiety that we will lose our freedom through mental and physical disabilities.

Before trying to relate the Vedic solution to this current social problem, I would like to first explain the Vedic view of old age and the Vedic remedy. This topic is discussed in great detail in the Fourth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* The *Bhāgavatam* is the history of Vedic civilization with attention to the incarnations of Godhead and His pure devotees. In one section, an allegory is told of a king named Purañjana, who symbolizes all conditioned souls in this material world. The sage Nārada Muni describes how King Purañjana tried to enjoy himself to the fullest extent but was eventually attacked by a woman named Jarā, who is the symbol of old age.

There is no way to overcome the influence of Jarā in material life. Any utopian idea that old age or death can be eliminated will never come about. Birth, death, disease, and old age are the four miseries of material life. Although scientists may work to try to alleviate these things and may appear to make a little progress, these natural miseries can never be removed. The Vedic approach is therefore different. We work to remove the very foundation of all these miseries, which is material existence itself. That approach will be more profitable than working within a concept that we can achieve a deathless or painless state within this temporary material life.

According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* we cannot slow down the march of time. There is a verse that states, "Both by rising and by setting, the sun decreases the duration of life of everyone, except for one who uses the time by discussing topics of the all-good Personality of Godhead" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.17). This especially refers to wasting time. Any time wasted can never be retrieved; even a million dollars cannot buy a minute back. *Whatever* one's duration of life, it's eventually vanquished. For the materialist, old age is therefore a signal that he has wasted his life. He thought he could be happy by omitting spiritual life and indulging in material pleasures, but when invalidity comes, it's not only too late for material happiness, but it's very difficult to make progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The story of Purañjana is told by the sage Nārada. Nārada says that Jarā once approached him with lusty desires but she couldn't attack him because he was a *brahmacārī,* a celibate. This means that persons who remain celibate like Nārada do not grow old in the way ordinary persons do. They tend to live longer and without so many pains. Śrīla Prabhupāda states in this section of the *Bhāgavatam:*

> If a person is Kṛṣṇa conscious, he can work like a young man even if he is seventy-five or eighty years old. Thus the daughter of Kāla (time) cannot overcome a Vaiṣṇava. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī engaged in writing *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* when he was very old, yet he presented the most wonderful literature about the activities of Lord Caitanya. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī began their spiritual lives at a very old age, that is, after they retired from their occupations and family lives. Yet they presented many valuable literatures for the advancement of spiritual life. . . . Thus Jarā, the effect of old age, does not harass a devotee.
>
> . . . Because a devotee rigidly follows the instructions of Nārada Muni, he has no fear of old age, disease, or death. Apparently a devotee may grow old, but he is not subjected to the symptoms of defeat experienced by a common man in old age. Consequently, old age does not make a devotee fearful of death, as a common man is fearful of death. When Jarā, or old age, takes shelter of a devotee, Kālakanya diminishes the devotee's fear. A devotee knows that after death he is going back home, back to Godhead; therefore he has no fear of death. Thus instead of depressing a devotee, advanced age helps him become fearless and thus happy.

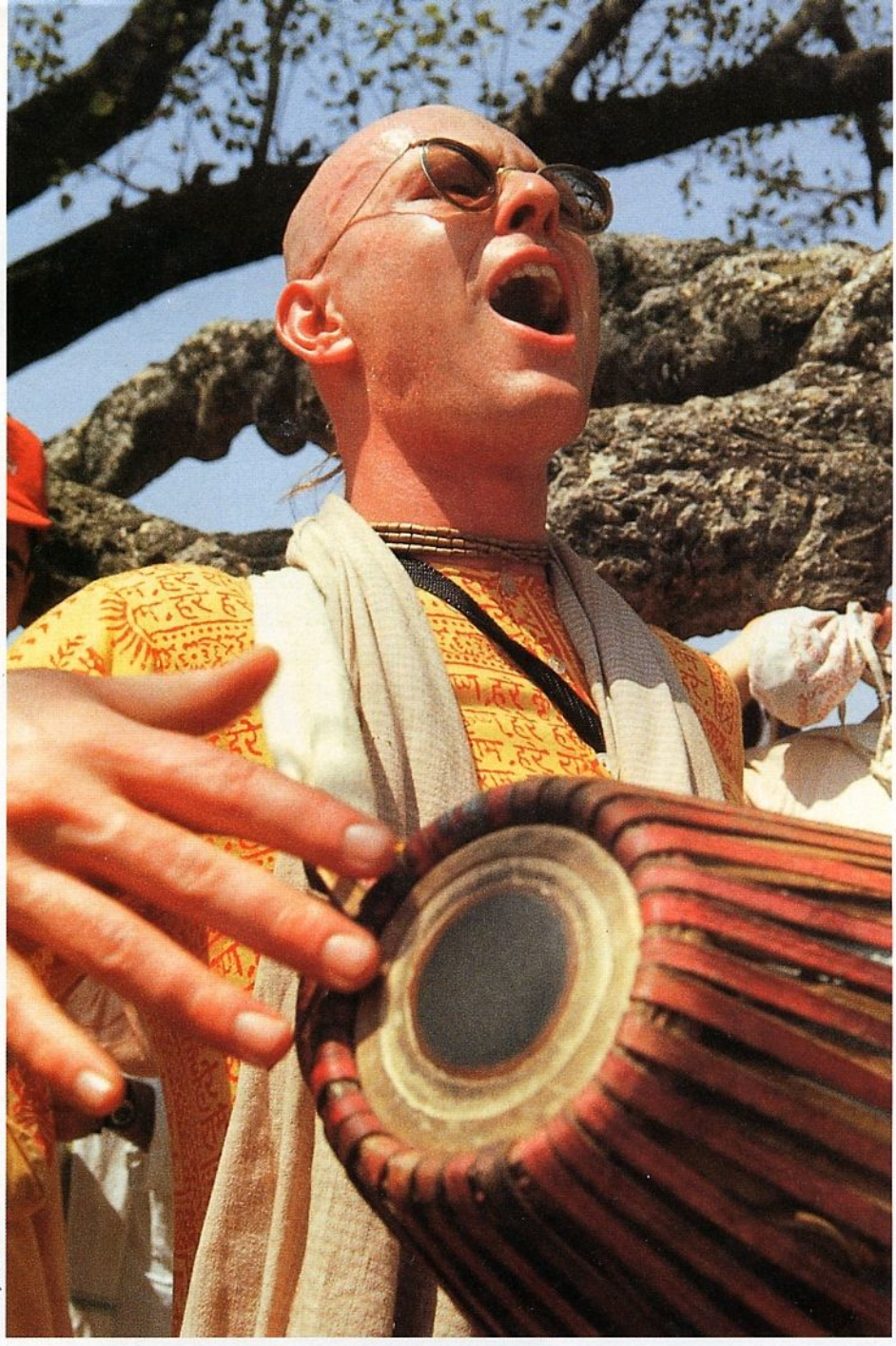
This was certainly true in the life of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He was very jolly and active with his writing and preaching until he departed at the age of eighty-two. Although his example is extraordinary, others can follow and be much more successful than people who are struggling with material formulas to get through old age.

One who engages in spiritual practices throughout his life will not necessarily be immune from old-age diseases, but he will most likely not have such severe problems. The occurrence of *senile dementia* is rare in a person who is enlivened and enlightened with spiritual consciousness. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja was in his nineties when he wrote the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* He writes there, "I have now become too old and disturbed by invalidity. While writing, my hands tremble. I cannot remember anything, nor can I see or hear properly. Still I write, and this is a great wonder."

So the debilitating condition may come, but it won't take away the higher consciousness, because one has been practicing higher consciousness all his life. But if one waits until the end of life to try to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, then the debilitation will overcome him.

So although the scientists may

(*continued on page 22*)



Yamarāja dāsa

HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA, KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA, RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE

It is due to a lack of knowledge that people say that God is dead, that there is no God, and that we have no relationship with God. These thoughts have been compared to the thoughts of a man haunted by a ghost. Just as a haunted man speaks all nonsense, when we become covered by the illusory energy of God we say that God is dead. But this is not a fact.

Therefore, we need this chanting process to cleanse our heart. Take to this simple process of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. In that way, in your family life, in your club, in your home, on the road—everywhere—chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and this darkness covering your heart, covering your real position, will be removed. Then you'll understand your real constitutional position.

Simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. It is the easiest and most sublime process. This is recommended, practical, and authorized. So take it. Accept it in any condition of life. Chant. There is no expenditure, there is no loss. We are not chanting a secret. No. It is open. And by chanting you will cleanse your heart.

—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Soul Food.

At the Sunday Feast, you'll enjoy a delicious meal that's nourishing to the body *and* the soul. Every Sunday at hundreds of Hare Kṛṣṇa centers all over the world, devotees prepare an opulent vegetarian feast for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord. Fresh grains, fruits, vegetables, and choice spices are cooked with devotion and offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa—and then to you. Because this *kṛṣṇa-prasādam,* or mercy of the Lord, is spiritual, it's sure to uplift your spirit. Come to the Sunday Feast—for a taste of real food for the soul. See address list inside for the center nearest you.